

A  
DISCOURSE  
ON  
EARTHQUAKES,

2.

AS  
SUPERNATURAL AND PREMONITORY  
SIGNS TO A NATION,

*Especially as to what occurred in the Year 1692.*

WITH  
SOME REMARKS

RESPECTING

That Assurance of Mind which is attainable in the  
Light and Power of Religion, under the greatest  
Surprizals and Terrors of Sense.

ALSO AN

Enquiry into the Ground of our Hopes and Fears,  
as to the Public State of the Church of Christ  
in these Days.

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the Rise and Fall of Papacy.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. TERRY, No. 54, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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*ENTERED AT STATIONER'S HALL, 1793.*

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**I***T is sure that the great Intent of Religion, is to bring Men into a near Communion and Intimacy with God, whilst they are here on the Earth, both by his Word and Providences; and where this end is no designed, it is a very low Interest that can be made by the Profession thereof: For it may be evident, how the Intellectual Part of Man, when it is in a serious and true Exercise, must tend either to their greatest Torment, or to an unexpressible Joy, when they cannot but see that their Good is not in their own Hand, but must every moment be dependent on an invisible Refuge and Support; since men are no Statutes, but in the solid use of Reason, must have deep impressions, both as to fears and hopes of future Events, and how sad and surprising Changes may be near in the Public State of Nations and Cities, as well as of Persons when all Human Refuge and Assistances will fail; yea, when then the great Law-giver's Right and Authority to a passive Obedience, will be found indisputable in the way of Judgment, over such, who would not acknowledge the same by active Obedience, under a Treaty of Grace. But yet such is the tender Regard of the Majesty of God to Human Race, and to the Work of his own Hand, that in the most severe, judicial Procedure with a People and Nation, he does not surprise without previous*

*Warnings before the Decree go forth, and hath a time of Patience herein, if so be, the Voice of threatened Judgment might be regarded; and whereby such Strokes, as have at last made desolate, might have been prevented. Tho' I find not either in Divine or Human Record, that any Kingdom or People, did truly meet God in the way of his Wrath, to put a Stop thereto, upon extraordinary premonitory Signs, except that one Instance of Nineveh. I know it is no easy thing to understand Warnings from Heaven aright, and to have a clear Interpretation of such Providences, or to discern the approaches of Divine Vengeance, when such intervals of forbearance, as are usual betwixt one Step and another thereof, takes off all fear of a greater woe that may be to come. There are two things which may occasion some deep and serious thought about the same, with respect to this juncture of Time we are now in: The First is, as to that difference which is betwixt extraordinary Warnings in the way of a Treaty, and such astonishing Providences as are of a predicting Nature, as presaging Signs, and as a signal of Judgment in its near approach to particular Places, which speaks the Certainty of what is signified thereby: This is a Subject that may surely cause matter of great Reflection upon what hath been both of late, and for some considerable time past, made visible by strange and unusual Discoveries of God this way, both from the Heaven and the Earth beneath: Nor can it be in the Dark, how such are become then portentous Signs and Prognostications of future Events; when they cease to affect and*  
warn

warn, or to work in a monitory way upon Men's Spirits : when the saddest of Mortal Signs does not awaken, nor tend to reclaim; when the Dread and Reverence of God does not accompany the most extraordinary Occurrences, of Providence, but Men thus become rather more hardened; yea, when such unusual Signs meet in an extraordinary Season of sin, and point as with the Finger thereat; which is a Conjunction of another kind, that hath a more dismal aspect, than all that was ever pretended, or feared from the Planets: But oh! who shall live when God does this, and does cease to warn any more, after renewed and unusual Methods he hath taken with this Generation for this end? But there is a Second thing to be matter also of serious thoughts herewith, for what ends such extraordinary Signs may be directed, since they never be in vain, when now there seems no promising Efficacy or Influence therewith, on the spirits of most, and are so easily past, as if they had no Commission from Heaven to discharge: But sure then is it that the Majesty of God will make known, he hath not forsaken the Earth; so that when his Word hath no Regard or Intercourse with Men's Souls, he will not yet leave them without some sensible demonstration of himself, and of a Divine and Invisible Power above them; as this way he will also awake and put his People more on their Watch, and to be on a preparatory Work, whatever Storm may be to blow.

This Scripture on which the following Discourse is founded, does give a most singular Account, how far a Christian may be raised above his ordinary reach, by  
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*a special Faith, in the Power and Evidence thereof, when it can have no possible Rise from any natural Cause; yea, as there is a Supposal here made of such a prodigious Concussion of the Earth, as if the Frame of Nature should be dissolved by some Earthquake, and is there literally to be understood; it did give a special Call to speak thereon in the first part of this Discourse, when such a concurrent Call was also in the way of Providence thereto, and to offer some special Reflections on what hath in this last Year 1692 occurred. I know the publishing thereof, might seem now too late, tho' I hope it may be the more seasonable to revive the Sense and Remembrance thereof, after some others have, (I doubt not) with much advantage discoursed on the same Providence, tho' I knew not thereof, when this was writ.*

*And I had not the least thought to have touched any thing of that Additional Discourse which is in the Close, if (in the blessed Disposal of the Lord) there had not then been some remarkable concurring Providence, which thus put me to some deep and serious thoughts on such a Subject and to have my Soul more nearly joined in therewith, for keeping sight of the way of the Lord, in such steps thereof, as needed his special Conduct and Teaching in a more than ordinary way.*

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A  
DISCOURSE  
O N  
EARTHQUAKES.

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PSAL. xlvi. 1, 2, 3.

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the Earth be removed: and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea. Though the Waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the Mountains shake with the swelling thereof.*

**I**T is one of the most adorable Mysteries of Truth, that for an Eternity the glorious God would hide himself within himself, in that unconceivable Fellowship, and Enjoyment of the blessed Trinity when there was no created Existence. But as such a Reflection must be bounded with a becoming silent and humble Admiration, as being too wonderful for us to think on; so is it matter of the highest joy and exultation of spirit, that we should have this day such a Being as admits us to see and enquire upon the Glory of that Work, which he hath brought forth within time, so infinitely becoming the Perfection of the *Deity*; and to have so clear a Discovery of the same, not only in the whole Dispensation of Nature and Providence, but as it is more nearly related to us in the Dispensation of Grace,  
and

and in the Speciality of that Work that he hath about each of his People in this Militant State; yea, thus to see on what Security we are fixed against the greatest hazards, and fear of future events: it was on this account that the *Psalmist* here, bears so great and wonderful a Testimony for God, and to the sureness of their State, who have him to be their alone Refuge, and trust in the most extreme Case.

This is indeed a *rare passage of Scripture*, and does imply,

1. *A supposal of that which is one of the most tremendous Providences that can occur, a Concussion of the Earth*, whereby the whole frame of Nature would seem not only to be shaken and cast into a trembling posture, but turned out of its place: And there is no reason to account for a *Metaphor* that the *Psalmist* makes use of, but to be taken in the *literal Sense*, as that which is supposeable may occur to the most excellent on the Earth.

But 2. What is more wonderful here, is a *Supposal* made of such a stupendous *Earthquake* by this Man of God, as though it were present and visible to his Senses, without any *Trepidation or Earthquake on his Soul*, to shew what a pitch sometimes the *Faith of Assurance* may be at, and what Relief thus is attainable amidst the greatest terrors of Sense, in the Light and Power of Religion, as is above the comprehension of Nature. He was one who had made a great Trial of God, and of acquaintance with him by inward converse, and does thus speak in a *Dialect* that is not intelligible to such who may pretend the highest flight, by Reason, in the Searches of Nature. I shall offer some *propositions* for a more clear understanding and improvement of this *Scripture*, the *first whereof is this*,

*That the most select and eminent of the Saints may meet*



meet with such a Trial to their Faith of the same nature as is here mentioned of some extraordinary concussion of the Earth as would seem to overturn the Settled course and Constitutions of Nature: It is true, such a strange Providence is not still alike in the same manner or measure, but sometimes is with the most tender regard, as a *premonitory Warning and Sign only*, when at other times it is with the greatest terror of an *immediate desolating judgment*.

That a *Supposal* of this kind may be suitable to the most endeared Favourites of Heaven, needs be no strange or difficult thing, when it is considered how it is by no *external Providences* the Lord hath designed the *more special discoveries of his Love* to his People, and that no Trial can be so astonishing or at such a pitch, as to exceed the measure and allowance of their Grace; but that the *Expence* this way be ever proportioned to their Receipts, and *measure of Faith*; yea, how it is to the most dismal trials and extremity the Lord hath reserved the *greatest experiments of his distinguishing respects to Christians*, and where his leading into the one by an immediate Conduct, hath been made so observable to make way for the other, and some more extraordinary appearance of himself in such a case.

It is not needful to insist on any concurrence of Natural and Occult Causes, that may be in so stupendous a Providence, when such difficulty and contradiction is to be seen amongst the late Writers, and such as have made the greatest search upon this head; and is so *conjectural and problematic a thing*, to know what influence herein the Sun may have, or *subterraneous fires*, as Descartes speaks; or *mineral vapours and Irruptions of Winds, penned up in the Caverns and Bowels of the Earth*; so dark is the Judgment that is on such an amazing *Phænomenon*, though it fall in within the *sphere of Nature*, when it is so visibly pre-

*ternatural* besides the course thereof. But it is a remarkable reflection which *Aristotle* makes, speaking upon this very Subject, that they must be brutish and stupid who are not deeply affected with so amazing a thing as an Earthquake, not only upon the Hazard, but as to the Original and Cause thereof: yea whatever subserviency the Majesty of God may make of inferior Causes in such Providences, when he does in so stupendous a way appear, yet it calls us to a deep and tremendous Sense hereof, as his alone Work.

But since this is a *Subject* of such weight, and what may justly cause great thoughts of Heart in the present Day, I shall speak a little to some special enquiries hereon. The *first* is this, on what *clear and infallible grounds* such an *astonishing concussion of the Earth by an Earthquake*, should be reckoned as a *Divine Sign*, and to have a *supernatural Causality* in directing the same to a Nation, and some particular place more than to others; for giving Light thereto.

1. It cannot possibly be denied that such as are *Sacred Signs*, and expressly *foretold in the Scripture* to take place, must have a *Divine and supernatural Causality* for accomplishing the same, that go above all *inferior or secondary Causes*, and can have no dependance thereon.

2. It is sure also, how this stupendous Providence is in a peculiar way reserved by the Lord to be a *demonstration of himself* to the World, in the *greatness of his Power and more immediate Presence*, by making that which he hath settled and made firm in itself, not only to shake but cleave asunder; to shew his absolute dominion over the most settled Constitutions of Nature. Thus did he in such a way cause

Numb. the Earth to rent in two, and swallow Dathan and  
16. 13. Abiram, to set up such a stupendous sign of Judgment

ment hereby, where Nature could have no concurrence; yea, in this way, though in a *promissory Sense* did the Lord give so extraordinary a *demonstration of himself and of his immediate presence upon that Marvelous effusion of the Spirit*. Act. 4, 31. when he caused the House and Earth to shake underneath, both to seize their spirits with a more deep fear and Reverence, and as a *Sign* that he would make the Nations to shake and tremble before his Divine Power by the *Gospel*. Yea, in the same manner did he bear testimony to the *Divinity of Christ in his sufferings*, by which a tremendous Earthquake, as an immediate and supernatural Sign; in which sense through the *Scripture* as it is ever given, as an extraordinary appearance of God for some special end, so it is unquestionable the greatest *Commenter* we have on the *Scripture*, is that which was writ by the finger of God himself in his Work.

3. It is with an undeniable evidence, we see a supernatural Influence and Causality in such a Providence, hath in all ages been matter of solemn Observation upon these remarkable events have followed such a *Sign*; so as in the most judicious Records of *History*, we do rarely find the one mentioned without respect to the other: Thus *Josephus* does most punctually relate these *Earthquakes*, that did so nearly precede the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the expiration of the Judaical State, as they were predicted by our Lord himself, *Matth. 24. 7.*

4. Yea, it is beyond question how sometimes such *Earthquakes* fall out with these *tremendous Circumstances*, and clear Evidence of an immediate Divine appearance; as serves a constraint herewith, on a *natural conscience*, to see and acknowledge a *supernatural cause*, and that they have some extraordinary Commission; so as it is not possible then for the worst of Men, to keep off the terror and impressi-



of an *invisible God*. And we see little what Interest *the Ministry of the Angels* hath herein, who have surely a more peculiar Delegation and Service in such extraordinary Acts of Providence.

5. As it is needful to understand the *Rule of Providence*, e're we can discern aright the *Seals* appended thereto, so is it evident that a great and stupendous *Earthquake* is foretold to be one of the *strange events of the last Trumpet*; which must assuredly take place in these last times, and have a literal accomplishment: And though its appearance then will be something we may judge, of an extraordinary kind, with some astonishing marks of Judgment; yet it is the intent of that *Prediction* clear herein, that when there is any appearance of God this way, it calls the World to a very solemn and awful regard of the same, and for some correspondent acts of Reverence and Homage, as is suitable to a Providence whereon he does put so signal an Impress of his terror and greatness. But it were well if Men's spirits were more prepared and inclinable not only to entertain any such intimation with Reverence and fear of the Divine Majesty, but to improve the same for a greater strengthening of their own faith of his glorious Being, and of the Divinity of his Words, when it is also directed for such an end.

A second *Enquiry* upon this subject and of great use,

*Is what may be more specially judged as the grounds of any such extraordinary Warnings and signs to a Nation, where God hath clearly revealed his Counsels and Judgments by his Word, and of his making use thereof.*

Though here the Sovereignty of his Will should both silence and subject our Spirits in such a case, yet there can be no Darknes therein, to any of a serious and judicious Spirit, when they see 1. Such  
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a fuitable congruity therewith, to that tenderness which the Son of God hath to mankind, and to Kingdoms and Nations in his Government of the World, that he will not only speak by his word but go to the utmost, by more *extraordinary Warnings* of some great and unusual stroke of Judgment e're it come, so as nothing may be wanting either to reclaim, or render such a People unexcusable: And it hath a most sad and fatal aspect, if this hath no fuitable impression in the present Day. 2. This can be no dark or strange thing when the times we are in, are such, that the *Honour and Glory of the Godhead* is interested to appear in some unusual manner before Men, when no application of Light to the Judgment, either from his Words or Works, in an ordinary way does prevail, when his *Name* is in so visible a way blasphemed, and all wherein he has placed his *Name* of so low a regard with this Generation. 3. Yea, may not yet some more strange and immediate appearance to this Generation be expected, when such a visible tendency now is to *sacrifice to natural causes*, whatever hath the greatest evidence to bring near an affecting Sense of the *Deity*, unto Men's consciences; and to account it a small thing to arraign and subject the greatest of his Works to the Comprehension of their dark and limited Reason; and that their Wisdom hath such a dominion and influence on future events, as they can *give Law to Providence*, and even lay *wagers* on what the next day is to bring forth. Oh! may not some unusual application be yet more than expected, to let men know they are under the dominion of that God, who can in a moment break the most promising Means and measures taken by Human Counsel, by one touch of his hand; and what hath been thought most infallible in the course of Human affairs. 4. And may it not be feared, that when these are so rare, who trem-  
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*ble at the Word and Threatnings of an invisible God, they should meet with such awakening Signs, as cause the Earth to tremble beneath? which in the very nature thereof, is suited to beget an awful and trembling posture of Spirit, and let us see how every moment it is dependant on Heaven, and in the Reverence thereof, that the Earth does not rent and swallow Men up. But it is clear also that extraordinary appearances of God, not only in Judgment, but in the way of Grace, have been most discernable, when things have come to an Extremity in the trials of Christians, and when their Faith and Patience have been ready to be overfet by disappointments, and contrary appearances, answerable to that of Isa, now will I arise, now will I be exalted, now will I lift up myself, saith the Lord.*

A third *Enquiry*, that I humbly judge is of concern here, is *what suitable and safe application may be made of such extraordinary Providences, to the present Day and place we are in.*

Since it is requisite that any impression of Fear, on such an account, be fixed on solid and rational grounds, and we be not affrighted with Shadows, but according to that evidence they bear of being supernatural signs and forewarnings, to have an answerable sense thereof; on which account, as to clear and applicatory judgment in such a case, I shall yet further offer a few things to be considered for this end. 1. That when something astonishing and unusual, above any influence of natural causes, is given to be a *premonitory sign* to a Nation or People, and hath an extraordinary call with it, it does surely speak there is some more than ordinary Piece of the Work of God than in bringing forth there, and on a near approach; yea, that is on some great and important ground, when the Lord does this way appear. 2. It is of undoubted evidence which we

must



must peremptorily hold by, that where the Majesty of God takes an unusual way to awake and warn a People, they must either answer the same, or else they are infallible prognostics of Wrath and judgment, and some dismal Night coming on: Nor can any *sign* be more mortal than this, that Men *will not consider the Work of God, or regard the operation of his Hand*, when it hath unavoidable evidence to be his alone Work. 3. There may be a clear and infallible application of what is more extraordinary in any appearance of God to a Nation, when such forewarnings have most immediately gone before some astonishing judgment, on a People who have not been under more aggravating circumstances of Guilt; yea, not comparable to the height that is this Day in our case: Since such *Precedents* of the severity of judgments in one place, are undoubtedly given to be a *premonitory sign* to another. 4. Yea, when there is some more singular *conjunction and reiterating* in a successive way of such *awakening signs*, it then hath not only a distinct sound, but a loud cry of some near and immediate approach of judgment, and that it may come upon the *last Call*. I know it is one of the greatest things of practical Religion, that needs a near intercourse with God, to have any such *application* brought near to Men's Souls, both in order to fear, and to account also the more immediate appearances of his Power and Workings, as a matter of their greatest joy, that the sense of a Deity might thus more strongly work on such a Generation: But oh! how sad a token is it, when such are not only rejected, but have a sinister and false application made of the same; and to see the Earth trembling at the near approaches of Divine wrath, when such as dwell thereon, have no fear of this kind, as Habac. 3. 10. *The Mountains saw thee and they trembled, the overflowings of the Water passed by, the deep uttered*  
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*ed its voice; but says the Prophet there, Was the Lord displeased against the Rivers? Was his anger against those Elements, &c. No, it was against Human Race, and given to be a sign thereto.*

But there is a fourth *Enquiry*, which comes more close and near to us on this *Subject*.

*To know what evidence such late extraordinary Providences do bear, as was at Jamaica, June 7, and here September 8, to be the alone Work of God in such an immediate and unusual manner, and to go forth on a special Commission to England, and to this great and renowned City of London; yea the whole Island.*

For Answer thereto, I must crave leave with humble sobriety, to offer some *reflections on both*, according to the express signature and impress, they bear not only of an extraordinary appearance of God herein, but of his Counsel and intent in this Day.

First. As to that *tremendous stroke on Jamaica*; we cannot but see, 1. Its being directed to a place where the whole *Country was purely English*, in its Interest, and Inhabitants, and as thus a part of the same Nation though at a distance; so that it can be no more evident that such a strange stroke, was real and no imaginary thing, than that it hath a proper aspect, in a *monitory way on this Island*, and set up as a *public Beacon and Monument of Judgment* in this respect, to shew how *terrible a thing it is to fall immediately into the Hands of the Living God*, when a People may seem most secure from all human Power, yea, that there can be no safety on the Earth, where their adversary is above them, and is God. 2. We see its being directed also with a special Commission to that *one place*, which alone was the most flourishing, populous part of the whole country; and thus made the *Scaffold* on which so dreadful an execution of judgment was acted, as did in *two moments*

ments, swallow up near 2000 of its Inhabitants, whilst no part else of the Island had any such dreadful effects; and was this a contingent and casual thing only, if Men do not exercise reason herein. 3. This, as it is publicly known, was after some remarkable forewarnings, given by a *trepidation of the Earth* there, a short time before; though in that manner, and with such tenderness then, as might shew a holding of the hand of judgment, even when it *was lifted up*. 4. It is yet further remarkable as I find it related from some who dwelt in that place, that no instance of traditional conveyance, was before ever known there, not only since the *first English Plantation*, but under the *Spanish Power*; so as in that sense, as *Moses* spoke, *Numb. 16. 13. The Lord did thus work a new thing in such a place of the Earth*, as it is thus circumstantiate. 5. But that which may most direct our Eyes to see an immediate appearance of God herein, and a causality above nature was, as is by all acknowledged, when such a *prodigious height of Impiety and Wickedness* seemed to have filled up its full measure, and no ordinary means could reclaim; so as the Holy God upon the honour of his justice and Government was thus interested to put so astonishing a mark of his severity and wrath on the same, and make known what one Day and Hour, may at last bring forth on a *City and Country* after a long forbearance, when it is least expected or feared.

But it is on this last *sign and extraordinary Concussion by an Earthquake*, that was on the 8th of September, I must offer a few *reflections* further, that hath come nearer to our sense, with so unusual an aspect.

1. That it was given in so near a conjunction with the former, and with such evidence as the Lord speaks to *Moses* *Exod. 4. 8. If they will not hearken to the voice of the first sign, they may yet hearken to the voice of the second; yea, when the first*  
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had the less influence, that it was so remote in its distance, this comes and speaks in that manner as Jeremiah, *I am a God near at hand, and not a far off only.* 2. If we look on the manner of it, it is so astonishing as is unaccountable to all Human reason, that so discernable a *trepidation* should be in one room in the same house and not in another, as was certainly known; yea, in so distinguishing a respect, that it was most preceptible and terrifying to one in the same room and not to another; tho' both in the sober exercises of reason. 3. And whence should such a correspondence in *this great sign* have a rise, that almost in the same hour it made the Earth to tremble at London, and in the *Sea-coasts* there, in so astonishing a manner, and then also give the same *signal* and Warnings through the whole *Low Countries and other adjacent parts of Germany*, when so great an extent of Sea lies betwixt the same; since it is not possible that in the ordinary course of nature the *influence of any subterraneous Fires or Vapors*, should have so immediate a conjunction with places so vastly remote, and separate from other by so great an extent of the Sea. I find some famous searchers into natural causes, write that an *Earthquake* is simply impossible in nature, to be of any universal extent. 4. And though we read in the *English Histories* some strange extraordinary instances that did occur of such a kind in *Queen Elizabeth's Reign* at London in the year 1580; at *Marly-Hill* in *Herefordshire* in the year 1571, when it removed itself from the place where it stood, and travelled to another place: as also a prodigy of the same kind which was in *Dorsetshire* 1582, yet was none of these, in the least, of such a nature as this, or in any respect parallel thereto; but were restricted only to particular bounds, tho' they were then matter of great observation in their day: but I humbly judge if the most exact

exact search were made into *History both Modern and Ancient*, under such circumstances no instance so strange and unaccountable, as to any natural causes herein will be found. 5. And what a state should we have been in, if it had but continued *three minutes more*? Or was there any human counsel or power that could either prevent or restrain the same in the least, of its going so far and no farther, but we might see at once, our hazard and deliverance set in our sight, from an invisible power.

But as all the Works of God, even such as fall under the observation of each day should be matter of special regard; such wherein his appearance is more extraordinary, calls for some greater advertence and enquiry about the same. I must therefore offer a few *reflections* further on this late astonishing providence. 1. That as it was now *ten years ago* since the Lord gave a sign in an unusual manner from the *Heavens above*, by that great and remarkable *Comet in the year 1680*, so now after such an interval of patience to this Generation he hath given a *sign of another kind which is from the deep beneath*, that comes more near to us, answerable to that of *Isa. 7.* where we may see how it is most eminently in these two ways the Lord does appear when he is to give *some great and significative sign to the World of unusual events*; and as nothing can bring more terror therewith than an appearance of such a kind, so needs it not be strange that this day, when the Earth hath so near a resemblance to the Infernal State, why this should be from *beneath*, and have so dreadful an aspect. 2. Though there might be cause why such a *concussion of the Earth* should cause just fears and tremblings of heart, yet does it exceed all human comprehension such a circumstance herewith, which was so universally noticed of *its affecting the head with a sensible giddiness*, even before they

they did apprehend or understand any thing of an *Earthquake*; which was so obvious to the most judicious observers, that it seemed as if an *Apoplectic distemper* had seized upon them, without any known cause for the same: this I have found so general a *remark*, as I could not pass it over, though without any application else, but that no natural cause can be supposable herein. 3. And if we regard the manner of this *sign*, as it is directed to such a time we are in, and in so strange an extent thereof, may it not also as with clear and articulate Voice be understood, that what is signified thereby will prove matter of trembling and astonishment, and may cause a trepidation in these western parts of Europe answerable thereto, so as to shake the most settled Constitutions of Nations, if so solemn a call be not regarded. 4. and though it might seem a strange Criticism, yet I hope not unsuitable to be noticed that this *last warning was given in the 2d Week of September*, as directed to revive the sense, and remembrance of what had been so highly remarkable to this great City in the *first week thereof*, and with a new call tho' in a most tender premonitory way, but with that evidence, as we are sure was immediately from Heaven; only let me add herewith, that sure Divine Threatnings, and the most tremendous Warnings to Kingdoms and Nations, are in their primary intention, designed to keep off Men from the Judgments threatened, and not to be gazed at for a matter of talk and report.

But oh! if the furthest measures of this kind can have no weight to answer the intent thereof: It is sure that God will be known to be God this day unto Britain, and before this Generation, by such an evidence and demonstration as will at last work effectually.

But having now so far touched these two extraordinary signs that have so lately occurred, I must for the same end point at a third, as so nearly contemporating with



with the former, though it may be feared, is gone out of sight and forgot, when the bitterness of death seems to be past, but did cause such fears in the present time and consternation of mind: *It is that unusual and astonishing rain, which in these parts, through most of the Summer continued,* when thus these sweet influences from Heaven, by moistning showers, to restore and ripen, were in that manner changed to be destructive, when we might see the Heavens with so extraordinary an aspect, as it were mourning from above over the Earth, *if hereby men would be awakened to the fear and dread of that God in whose hand both our breath and bread is;* yea, when it was come to that extremity in its continued course, as threatened to make void the *Harvest*, and when but *one week almost seemed to stand betwixt us and such an unavoidable stroke;* when no human Counsel or Power, could save the Nation from perishing in such a case: It was then the Sovereign God did stay his hand, and with an eminent testimony of his tenderness, not only shut up the clouds, but gave such a *Compensation* by a most serene desirable Season, as might recover in a short time, what the former months had spoiled, and seemed in an ordinary way to Men's thoughts irrecoverable.

But I shall shut up any further insisting on this subject, with a short touch only at *some improvement hereof for these ends. First to a solid fixing of our Judgment and Light about the same*—There is nothing more amazing and dreadful to the spirit of many in this day, than any *supernatural appearance in the events of Providence*, as renders the sense and impression of an invisible God, and his dominion over *second causes*, to be unavoidable, and on this account, as these seem to be in such a fear upon the *truth and existence of Devils*, since their Faith hereof, must needs bring them to the same with the *Devils to believe*

*lieve and tremble:* So is it in this case, Men are so much on the rack how to solve all by *natural Demonstration*, that may darken any immediate appearance of God; as *Jennes* and *Jambres* in *Egypt*, until at last they were constrained to see and acknowledge it was a Divine Power alone they opposed themselves to; but such as will peruse what the most *judicious of modern Philosophers* speak on this *head*, may see how dark and perplexed their Inquisition is hereon, and how strait bounds they are penned up in, whilst they jointly confess that an *Earthquake* is by no natural motion of the Earth, but is impetuous and violent, that moves contrary to the settled course of nature, and fixedness of the Earth; but that some extraordinary stop and obstruction is herein, and when they come to fix on the particular cause hereof, think it most probable to be either *Ab aqua, à flammis subterraneis, vel ab halitu:*\* But if they will rise higher upon another *principle*, to give a true idea of nature, they must then see also how it is acted by God as his *instrument*, to do whatever he will, and that the *motions of all inferior causes* must be ultimately resolved, both on an immediate Divine concurrence to their working, and on his directing Counsel to answer his intent; since as the *Eye of God is still on the whole circle of the Creation in its motions*, so is his dominion over the *deep and darkeſt Caverns of the Earth*, to move upon his call; which can never be subjected to the rule of natural Causes. It is true, that in the ordinary course and procedure of Providence, the only wise God hath a special respect to the order of inferior causes, and his own ordination therein, and does thus exercise his dominion over the World, and the motion of things there, according to their *particular nature* wherein he hath fixed them; but *when sublunary things step out of their natural course*, and do either  
move

\* Water, Subterraneous Fire or Vapour.

move against or above their own *nature*, it is surely then upon a supreme determination for a great end, and some notable step of Providence is to be understood herein; yea, it is most conspicuous in the way of God, when great events of what is foretold in the Scripture, are in bringing forth as to any piece of his Work, wherein he designs some higher discovery of himself to Men, that it is when *secondary causes* and the whole concourse of nature would seem most to controul the same; and in this present case, if with a serious and prepared mind, Men do consider these *two late Earthquakes* under their proper circumstances, then it is not possible but they must see them to be such events, as cannot possibly be ascribed to another cause, than an immediate Divine Power exerted in the same.

There is a *second improvement*, which on this head is now called for, *to have our eyes thus carried up towards God by serious observation*: I know this is not easily attained, to be in a due capacity and posture to converse with him this way, wherein lies one of the nearest intercourses betwixt Heaven and our soul within time; but it is of great use to know aright where the intent of *judicious observation* on such an account should be most fixed, as 1. On the *immediateness of such acts of Providence to be from God alone* as can be ascribed to no created Power, which is a discovery that comes not with more terror to a profane World, whose study is to *live without God therein*, than with unspeakable joy it meets these of a serious spirit for a more full establishment of Faith, and to see it with that evidence, as makes it unavoidable to terminate their eyes otherwise than on God alone herein, *Duet. 32. See now, I, even I am he, and there is no God else; I kill and make alive, I wound and I heal, &c.* 2. It is then our *observation* is suitably fixed, when it respects the clear impress  
of



*of Divine truth on any extraordinary step of his way, no less than of his Power, since as his Work is ever answerable to his Being, and the Perfections of his Nature, so is the outgoings of his truth, and Faithfulness herein to be intently observed: who does rule and govern the World according to these established Laws and Constitutions of his revealed truth. 3. It is essentially requisite also to consider and see such Providences as are more extraordinary, under these circumstances which most remarkably attend the same. It being sure how great a weight one circumstance may have to render a Providence in some singular way, to be both instructing and comforting, which otherwise would not work in that manner. Thus did the Ruler so exactly enquire and observe at what hour it was when his son recovered, and found it answer to that very time when Christ had given him the assurance thereof. It is herein one of the great duties of our day lies, and I am persuaded that great things for observation, do yet wait upon this time.*

*Providence hath been a long teacher to Britain, and it useth to be the last teacher that is made use of, and the last way that the Spirit of God does strive with a People or Nation, before approaching Judgment: We have seen it go by on the right hand in most singular dispensations of Grace and Mercy to these Nations; as also upon the left hand in extraordinary Acts of Justice, yet have we little seen or perceived to this day, the most special intent of the Lord herein: But since I have spoken more expressly thereto elsewhere, I forbear to touch it further; only this Improvement further, might be suitable on such a subject, to impress Men's spirits with the fear and dread of walking contrary to Providence, especially in any more extraordinary discoveries of God this way, since this is the highest contempt and opposition upon the Earth, to his Providential Government and does in an unusual*

usual manner, hasten and prepare such for the last stroke: this seems to be one of the *signs of our time*, that hath a sad resemblance to these in the *Primitive times*, 2. Pet. 2. who turned Divine Patience to be a matter of scoff, and said, *Where is the promise of his coming*, since we see things continue yet as they were and have yet outlived many *threatning tokens and presages of Judgment*? But it is usually seen, that such who have looked on *premonitory signs* with the greatest confidence, and have counted any serious regard thereto, to be a superstitious weakness, have been beyond all others, seized with the greatest terror and amazement, upon a surprizing stroke: *A reverential fear and dread of Divine Warnings*, and of the evil Day, is most highly becoming such who may have the greatest security of mind, as to their own personal lot therein, such as Habac. 3. 16. *When I heard this my belly trembled, my lips quivered, &c. that I might rest in the Day of trouble.*

A *second proposition* that hath the same clear evidence with the former from this Scripture is this, "that such an assurance of Faith is attainable here  
" on the Earth, as can bear out, and secure the  
" soul of a Christian in a present extremity, and  
" amidst the greatest terrors of sense, when there is  
" no possible support from nature, or things seen  
" in such a case." To this does the *Psalmist* here bear a most clear witness. I confess it is one of the most astonishing mysteries of our Religion, which is wholly unaccountable to the Spirit of this World; and it hath been matter of wonder to me, in how ordinary a way such a *subject* is oft spoken of, and what length is come in the *notion and theory*, when so little of the experimental light hereof, seems to be found on the Earth in this Day: But where it is known in truth, it is surely one of the *greatest demonstrations of God*, and of his immediate Power

and working on the Soul in this Militant State, yea, such as may supply the room of any *external Miracles* to these, who know the same; it is a thing of that nature, as exceeds *the Sphere of all created Power* to work, and goes far above the reach of *Angels* to impart the same; but to him only it belongs *who is both the Author and Finisher of our Faith*; yea, which according to the *out-lettings of his Spirit*, herein makes so unspeakable a difference betwixt such and themselves to whom it is thus known, how in one time then they are made to differ from another, and where the *Sorrows and Pains of a doubting Heart*, about the warrant of their hope is understood, it will be then known what unexpressible joy the truth of such an assurance as we find here in the text does rise, and be as a *resurrection from the Dead* in that case. It is true with a *particular confidence and trust*, that hath nothing from things seen, or on any natural account to fix, cannot bear out in the way of light only, even on the most clear grounds of a Divine Promise herein, but is immediately dependant on that measure of the *Spirit of Faith*, which is then given to answer to the height and measure of their present trial; but yet it is sure and unquestionable, that such a faith as is not founded in appearances, hath a *Ballast* as will not be broken by contrary appearances; and since this may look as a very dark and amazing thing, what relates to such singular workings of a Christian's Faith in an extremity, I would speak a few things to be previously considered in what manner this acts *on the highest principles of enlightned reason*, as well as by *supernatural influence*, and how nothing can be more rationally deduced than such a *conclusion* which David here makes from the foregoing *premises*, since it is undeniable:

1. That such a sweet and absolute necessity there  
is



is for men to betake themselves to a Divine *Power and Relief*, only in a present exigence of trial, when it is sure that God hath afforded nothing to Man without himself in the whole frame of the Creation; to bear up that weight of dependance and trust; so as we must herein either *cease from Man whose breath is in his Nostrils, in the way of reliance or part with God*: Nor can any time ever find that to be *blessed*, on which the God of truth hath by any irrevocable sentence settled a *curse*. But this is one of the rare characters of a Christian, when in such a manner, both his choice and confidence does center in God alone, as he is resolved to trust him only or none else; and to *lie at Anchor* on his revealed truth, or perish. The great Former of Heaven and Earth will not bear the empty name and shew of being his People's hope, when the interest and weight thereof, is laid on things besides himself.

2. It is no less demonstrable and known on this head, that *there is no possible rest or quiet to the Soul of Man* amidst the hazards and terrors of time, but in an entire dependance and trust on an *invisibile God* and his being their alone refuge, and help, for the *profession of the only true God, and of our Souls adventuring entirely on him as the alone object of our trust, is one and the same*; and as there is a receding from the one, so is there consequentially from the other also, in *denying to him the Glory of his God-head*. Nothing is indeed more usual than to see Men's confidence still *Ebb and Flow*, according to the visible posture of their Affairs, tho' it does sadly evidence such a trust and reliance that hath its greatest weight on something else than God, however he bear the name thereof. It is unquestionable that the greatest *Princes and Monarchs, need to have their dependance no less settled on God, even for outward supplies, than the Poor*; whose holding hereof, is no less absolutely from

him, than those who may be put to live on human charity, and are ever in his reverence, who can *make the Scarlet to embrace the Dungbill*, when it would seem not conceivable to human reason: It is in this respect that one of the highest trials of Faith is, when external advantages do most abound, and in that sense *riches prove so mortal* to those who enjoy the same, and, as *Christ himself testifies*, is *no less hard for such to be saved than for a Camel to go through a Needle's Eye*: It is so rare for Men to have *the World in their Hand and not upon their Heart also*, as the ground of their confidence and trust.

3. This should be also considered *for giving light to the Work of Faith* in any extraordinary trials, *that it is sure the utmost perfection of this excellent Grace, not only in its truth, but in the Degree and Measure thereof, is alone in this life attainable*; so that this is not possible to be at a higher pitch than in this Militant State, or to have another Season for paying in that *tribute of Glory and Praise unto the God of truth, and to his faithfulness*, which is so highly called for in the way of believing, but within time only; but in a more special way in the greatest exigence and strait which may be in a Christian's case, when their hope seems most visibly stated against them. It is in this sense, *the Apostle speaks of the filling up of the Work of Faith in a Christian day*, 2. Thess. 1. 5. as one of the highest designs of Providence in the Conflicts of their warfare, though the same measure in this Work and Trials hereof, be not allotted to some as to others; yea, it is in that respect only *James speaks*, Chap. 1. 4. *for the Patience of Faith to have its perfect work*, and to attain this in the utmost degree, since it belongs only to this life.

4. But is it not a *Compensation to the hardest Lessons of a Christian's confidence and trust*, and to the most remarkable hour of Extremity, that we know  
God

*God hath reserved thereto, the most immediate and extraordinary discoveries of himself; and of his being God alone, above what is known in the ordinary course of his Providence: said I, not unto you, if you would believe that ye should see the Glory of God, Joh. 11.* which was a sight that our Lord would not give until all support in the way of sense was taken off, and that it was put beyond the possibility of nature. And it is sure, *that on such rare experiment and trial of God in a Christian's life, and in a case where none but God can act*, is of such value, as to be a continued matter of admiration; yea, is an *earnest of that kind*, as may bear evidence to their Security by a special conduct of Providence in all after times, when this is enjoyed not only as it is *demonstrative of the greatness of his Power*, but on the *account of his Promise*, and as a *Seal* thereto in the way of their Reliance on him.

5. It is surely here in the powerful workings of a Christian's Faith, in an extraordinary hour of trial, that one of the *great demonstrations of the truth and excellency of our Religion, is exhibited before the World*: and what a temporal interest does thus accompany the same, to support and quiet the Soul? yea, to bear the full expence of the saddest afflicting times, which is not known to the residue of Men besides. For it should be a sad part; if *any case* were of that kind in a Christian's lot, as did exceed a *supernatural relief by reliance entirely on God*; when nothing besides in any visible way is left: But here does the *glory of our Religion with an eminent brightness shine forth*, when such as look but at a distance, can see the *effects thereof*, to afford quiet and rest to the mind, where it is sure nature could give no assistance, when human refuge hath most visibly failed, when *Lovers and Friends have stood afar off*, and when the *frownings of Providence* have been such,

as



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as

*as if their God was become a party against them, and their Eyes made to fail in waiting for his appearance; yea as it is sure all natural causes must still have their operations and effects, congruously to their proper nature, so is this alone peculiar to that excellent Religion we enjoy in the truth thereof, to afford a supernatural Virtue and Efficacy therewith, so as to give rest and refreshment to the most perplexed and weary spirit; and to commend its institutions by the influential presence of the spirit of God, as that way whereby Man here on the Earth in this visible State, is advanced and made capable of an immediate and familiar converse with an invisible God, which is one of the wonders of Religion, that might in another manner affect and work upon us, if it were truly believed. Oh! what a subject is this to converse with, that such a demonstration of the Christian Faith is known and sure, as a vital intercourse and communion betwixt our blessed Head, and these who are united to him by Faith here on the Earth; so as the greatness of that local distance, which is betwixt the third Heavens and this lower World can be no lett thereto, when yet the least moral distance by any impurity and defilement through sin, does separate betwixt God and the Soul, and obstruct this enjoyment.*

But since this is not conceivable at a distance in what manner a surprising extremity may work, when it is the object of sense, and Men's confidence is resolved entirely on a supernatural relief; when it is no theory or light in the judgment can express the same as in an experimental way is known; yea, when the actings of Faith in the Power thereof, in such a trial is so rare and wonderful a thing above natural comprehension. Let me yet offer here some of the most choice improvements that are called for, to the attaining such an assurance and establishment of Faith when things may come to some unusual exigence.

1. How



1. How then, such whose acquaintance with God is not to begin, can have this *reflection* alone with their Soul, *that they know whom they have believed, and his being able to keep that which was committed to him, and give an account thereof, in a day of extremity*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. yea, knows the God of *their trust* is such who can extend his Power and relief unto things that are unconceivable to us, and past finding out; who can serve himself of *means visibly destructive to save* in a way contrary to their proper nature: *whose help tarries not for Man nor waits for the Sons of Men*; and is ever at work to make his Providence serve the interest and accomplishment of his Truth to such who have settled their reliance thereon, though the whole visible state of things, would seem to conspire against the same; and, can then look up to *that God* (when there may be no look downward, but to cause terror) whose *Kingdom and dominion*, is not only *over all* but can immediately act on their Souls, to quiet and settle the same, though the Earth about them, should be in a visible disorder and confusion.

2. It is then, even under the most dismal aspect of external providences, that such can betake themselves to the *certainty of Divine truth*, and cast *Anchor on that ground* on which they must shortly adventure for an eternal State, in that greatest trial at Death: Thus did *Abraham* rest his Soul when he had such a strange tide of contrary providences to shake him, and *was not staggered at the Promise*, knowing it was given by that God, with whom it *was impossible to lie*; and Oh! what a *Hell* should this Earth be, if the enjoyments of a Christian's faith and hope, had another dependance than on God alone, and were in the Reverence of outward things; yea, if there were not such a *certainty of supernatural evidence and assurance*, as in a midnight

night hour, can bear up against the greatest contradictions of sense.

3. There is this *great assistance* to improve in the darkest trial, what *former acquaintance with the ways of God* hath been attained for discerning how the designs and methods of grace, do lie towards them, by the light of his truth: Thus when *present affliction* and *distress*, seems most astonishing, they are not in the dark herein, to understand what unusual measures the most endeared favourites of Heaven have had of such a trial, whilst they were on the Earth, and that they are upon no strange or unknown ground in such a case. They know thus what an *illustrious and essential part* the most *deep distresses and straits* in a Christian's life, hath in the *great frame of Divine Providence* to bring forth the greatest comforts and mercies thereof; and that according to the measure both of their *grace and services for God*; they must expect his way towards them, to go out of the ordinary road of his dealing with others.

4. It is likewise in the most dismal hour, when all human refuges do succumb that such can with delight, reflect on *that ancient Friendship and intercourse of Love* hath sometimes been betwixt God and their Souls, as being still an *undoubted earnest in their hand*, though they may not have the *same inward sense* and evidence therewith, on their heart as formerly: yea, the singular comfort and advantage which is in a *judicious observation of these more extraordinary Acts of Providence*, that have met them formerly, will be then understood, when they come to a serious recollection of the same. It is true, the measure of such a *Talent* with some, may much exceed that of others, whose life hath been filled up with more singular experiments of this kind, what God hath been to them in some unusual way, and in the more immediate interpositions of Providence; yet

yet where something is in any measure of such an *assistance* for a clear and sweet review on the same, it is not expressible how this will work in a *new exigence when the comforter indeed brings it to their Remembrance*, it is a *strong argumentation* that the spirit of God affords this way to raise the confidence of his People, *in the most extraordinary case, Job 5. He will deliver in Six Troubles, yea, in Seven*; by which *in Scripture Stile*, is to be understood a *note of perfection*, when it comes to the highest and most extreme part of trouble, that then these experiences were assured *pledges*, that his *Power will not fail in the Seventh*, or come short of bringing forth so great a deliverance. It is true one day may come in a Christian's way to heighten *the trial* of their Faith, more than all the preceding part of their life: But it is no less remarkable in the way of grace, how these also have been in some singular manner then *trained and ripened* for such an assault e're it came; and as the greatest *Paroxysm of a disease* is usual upon the *height of a crisis*, and when it is on a *turn* so is it experienced, *how astonishing a darkness does oft fall down*, when some eminent appearance of God in the way of comfort and light to a Christian, hath been most immediately near. It is not conceivable also until it be tried what *Satan's greatest design and effort means*, which each of the Saints does once prove, in some time of their life, though not in a like measure; yea, how singular a time this is found to be, *for some higher trial of God* beyond their former experience: But it may be a strengthening remark to our Faith, how the *design of those Powers of darkness*, are most deeply laid against the followers of Christ, according to their *room in the body*, and any more special services for him that may be allotted to such. I remember a passage of *Luthers* in his common places with respect to himself, very remarkable; *videtur mihi Satanas a pueritia mea aliquid*  
E providisse



*providisse in me eorum, quæ nunc patitur, ideo ad per-  
ad impediendumque me incredibilibus machinis insanivit,  
u sæpius fuerim admiratus, egone Solus essem inter mor-  
tales, quem ita peteret.*

5. There is one singular assistance also, that such who have attained some near intercourse with God in the way of his truth, have beyond others, in the darkeſt hour, *by a review on theſe particular promiſes* that have been with the *moſt full evidence and Seal of the Spirit of promiſe*, ſometimes enjoyed in a ſenſible application of the ſame: It was this gave *David* ſo ſtrong an argument to plead and prevail with God, *Pſal. 119. 49. remember the word unto thy Ser-  
vant whereon thou cauſeſt me to hope*; and it is clearly in that ſenſe it muſt be underſtood, *Heb. 11. of theſe who by Faith obtained promiſes from God*, being made theirs by ſuch an *immediate Seal and application*, that gave them as clear an intereſt therein, as if they were in the *performance*. And ſurely where the teſtimony of the *renewed conſcience* is kept clear here-with, as to the truth of the *condition* to which theſe *promiſes* relate, the very life and comfort of a Chriſtian's truſt lies in ſuch a ſupport, above what is expreſſible, than in an hour of temptation.

6. But there is one improvement further in order to a Chriſtian's faith and ſupport, in the moſt extreme caſe to conſider, that in a ſhort time he is to make a *trial of Faith*, that will be of another nature than he hath ever known before; and no trial within time can be like this, which is *at Death*; when the whole viſible part of Man, muſt be ſhut up in a dark and narrow grave, which had once the ſpacious Earth to move in, and did enjoy the light of the ſame, where in one moment there is a parting with all intereſt and comforts, in this lower World, and an immediate entry on the deciſion of their eternal State, which is then irrevocably caſt; where they can have no intelligence from all who have gone before,

fore, what it is to *die* or what manner of *sight* that will be, which is *at the first opening of those gates of the second World, either as to blessedness or torment*; yea, where there can be no possible assistance from nature, in the *shutting of this dark Gulf*, nor is conceivable by human light, the way and manner of that Passage; so that any *exigence* which may seem most trying to a Christian's faith here on the Earth, is but as a *prelude and preparatory part to this last step of their Warfare*: And as *Death was in its first constitution purely penal*, and is no *natural accident* which meets us *not as we are Men*, but *as we are Sinners*, there is no true support possibly attainable then, but in the Virtue and power of Religion.

But it is now in a more *applicatory way* I must yet speak further, with respect to so great a *subject*, and what in order to light hath been held forth thereon.

I. That if Men do not design a resolute opposition to God in *those late premonitory signs of this present year*, it is not morally possible then, to withstand such a *concatenation of Evidences*, of a *supernatural discovery* thereby; and that they were surely *directed with a special Commission from him*, and forewarnings of such a kind as are suited to the design of Providence in this day; and when there is so *little Faith now on the Earth*, with respect to any threatenings of the Word is it strange though there be some *unusual demonstrations of God in the way of sense*, to speak to the World by a monitory voice: It is true the Lord did never give forth *Miracles to attest before Men the truth of his Deity, which hath a Witness thereto in every object of sense*, and from the *whole Constitutions of nature*, yet have these been most specially directed to awake a more deep, and tremendous impression of the *Majesty of God on Men's*

souls, when the voice of his revealed truth is not regarded: And there is just cause to believe that the design of providence this day, is in another manner now, than in times past taking place, to let this Generation know, *that surely there is a God who judgeth in the Earth, before whom the greatest of Men must either bow or be broken*; and that the time is not only near, but is now come, *for his taking to himself his great Power to reign, with another appearance of his greatness and terror, than was ever known before in the World.* And Oh! what must be expected to work for greater excitements to fear, and a more awful sense of a supernatural and Divine Power, and of his supreme government over the World, when *no instituted means in a moral way, does answer to this end: Tho' it is sure, if that relation we stand in to the Deity, and the interest of our engagements to him, with the greatness of our hope from him alone, were taken to heart, we could not but account such, to be most desirable acts of Providence; yea, rejoice herein, where he gives the most near and immediate discoveries of himself, when the vindication of his glory is so visibly concerned in the same, even though it should cause trembling to Human sense, and be at a very dear and expensive rate to a secure world.*

But it is *on another Head* that I must more especially insist in a practical way, as to the *great Security of Faith with such a full Reliance on God, as is here held forth in this Scripture*, and to what a Degree the Elevation of a Christian's Soul may be thus raised with that inward Assurance, as can bear out against the greatest Terrors of Sense: This is *a Demonstration of God by his immediate working on the Souls of Men, which is wonderful*, and should be matter of great Improvement in the saddest Trials of our Warfare, to know in what manner *divine Power, is thus exerted*, as can in a Moment, dispel the



the most extreme Fears and Darkneſs on the Soul, ſo as to make Day ariſe, and a Sun ſhine there, when it hath been as Midnight otherwiſe. And ſince this is a *Subject* of ſuch Weight, as the very Life, Comfort, and ſuſtaining of the Soul amidſt the innumerable Hazards and Trials of time, lies herein, as to a full Affurance and Acquieſcence of the Mind, but the certainty of our Faith that we are thus ſafe, and in ſure Terms with God, it may be needful to answer a few *Propoſals* for giving Light thereto.

1. *How we are to apprehend aright, ſo great an Attainment of Grace as this is, and to have our Judgment ſettled, and clear about ſo wonderful an Experiment.* I know it is no ordinary *Standard* or *Example*, what is here held forth in ſuch Affurance of *David's Faith*, when no ſuppoſal of Hazard or Extremity, was then too great for the ſame; for, even this great Man of God, had at other times his *low Ebbs and Faintings*, that were as remarkable, as ſuch a Triumph and *High-Spring-Tide*, which we ſee here in the Power of believing; but on the other Hand, this is a ſtrange *Riddle* to the Spirit of the World, and unaccountable to all Reaſon in the Eyes of many who profeſs the ſame Doctrine of our Faith; as if it were ſomething that *alone works in the Power of ſome ſtrong Imagination*, whiſt they take up Religion in a natural way only, which goes not above moral Inducements, and the Power of free will: I muſt therefore ſpeak a little in a ſpecial way, to ſuch a *Propoſal*. 1. That the great Deſign of the Goſpel, does moſt eminently lie here, not only to reveal the *Mystery of Grace and of Redemption*, in what Chriſt hath done us, but to acquaint us alſo with the immediate and internal work of Faith on the Soul, which he does work and perfect in us, as the Author and Finiſher thereof; which was ſo wonderful a thing, as put one of the *Disciples of Chriſt*, to  
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that strange Enquiry, *Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the World?* and in such a distinguishing way by inward Evidence and Power. 2. This cannot be understood aright, but by such a Discovery thereof, *as one of the essential parts of that rare Divine Workmanship of the new Man*, which in its whole Life and Actings, hath no other Subsistence, but by *immediate Supplies from Heaven*; and as in one time of a Christian's Life, his *Faith* will need a more extraordinary Allowance for Support, than in another; so I must humbly judge the *present Time we are in*, is such as needs in a more than ordinary way, some clear Understanding of *this Mystery of Faith*, by practical Light, and the virtue thereof in an Hour of Temptation, when the times seem to be growing so dark, as the Spirits of the most Judicious discerners of things, are put to Astonishment, to think what Providence may be bringing forth, when *the Sea-Compass seems as it were to fail*, and so little of any comforting Signs, but for a long time past, have been in Paths so untrodden, as is not easy to trace or find a clear way before us. 3. But this cannot be understood as some *singular and powerful Operation of the Spirit of God*, which upon some special Service for him, may be imparted to such as never knew *his gracious Inhabitation* in their Soul, or what it is to be entered in such a State of *Communion with the Spirit*, as is by his settled Residence and abiding with them, *John 14. 17.* For such is this mystery of Faith in the Nature thereof, as its true acting and work, is not attainable, without a *vital influence from Heaven*, and where its gradual Increase and Advance is *made a Reward to frequency in the Acts thereof*, and these *resolute Adventures and Reliance*, which hath through Grace, been attained on a *Divine Power*. 4. But for a more full understanding hereof, it is not possibly

sibly attainable, without a *supernatural Evidence* accompanying the same; such whereby it clearly sees both the Excellency and Certainty of things that are above Sense, how they are no less *sure than great*: And though the highest *Enjoyments of Faith*, whereby the Soul rests about Things to come, as if they were present, hath no such immediate Evidence thereof as they are in themselves, and are the Objects of our Sense; else they could not *be hoped for, if they were thus seen*: Yet it is upon no *Credibility*, but upon the highest Certainty, that this quieting work of Faith, is founded: But how this *supernatural Evidence does work on a Christian's Soul in an Hour of greatest Trial, is not expressible by Words*, though it doth then clear itself in the same manner, *as the Daylight does when the Sun shines*. For, when it is known in the Power thereof, in times of Faintings and Distress, it hath then such a Call therewith, by a present Efficacy, as *Psal. 116. 7. to return unto their Rest; a Rest of Tranquillity and Assurance from God*, in the way of a Promise, when there may not be the least Appearance of its Performance. Thus did Abraham know the Truth and Power of such an Evidence upon his Soul, when *he staggered not at the Promise through Unbelief*; when both the way of Providence and the course of Nature, upon his hopes of Isaac, did most visibly controul the same. But let me add herewith, that the most choice and experienced in the Work and Advantages of Faith, *bath not done with the Settlement hereof, even after the greatest Confirmations*; for whilst he is within time, he must still look out, both for new Assaults, and further Experiments of Assistance for this end, and to attain a higher Growth: But oh! how dark and strange a Thing is, this and how disrelishing to most in this present Day? who count it enough to have their Religion in the Bible, but not in their Soul; and



and to have it in *external Ordinances*, and a *visible Form*, but in no *inward Enjoyments* of the same.

A *Second Proposal* upon this great *Subject* of the *quieting Power of Faith*, amidst the *Hazards and Terrors of Time*, is to know the *Truth* hereof, in the *sureness of its Principles*, and on what a *clear Warrant*, so wonderful a *Piece* of our *Religion* does found: This I must touch a little, to clear the same, both from any *presumptive Confidence*, and *enthusiastick Pretences* on such an account; and that its holding in the way of *Right*, on the *Warrant of Divine Truth*, is no less sure, than the enjoyment hereof is sweet; when we can with such *Evidence* see.

1. How it hath this *fundamental Principle* to hold by, that the *God of Truth* hath taken the *establishing of his People's Faith*, under his own *Hand*, as his alone *immediate Work*, and is such a *Work*, that none but he can accomplish: Thus we see 2 Cor. 1. 20. the *sureness of the Grounds of our Faith* held forth, that *all the Promises of God in Christ, are Yea and Amen in him*, unto the *Glory of God*, &c. But though here is enough as to a *Divine Warrant and Right*, yet will not this alone bear out, without it be *God's immediate Work* also, when a *Storm* riseth; therefore, *Verse 21.* it is expressly shewed, that *he who establisheth us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; and hath given us the earnest of his spirit*, to raise the *Faith of his People*, answerable to the *Height and Measure* of any present *Trial*.

2. Is it not on this *sure Principle of Truth* also, that *Faith* in the *Power*, and *Supports* hereof, even in the most extraordinary case of *Trial*, does found? That the *Lord Jesus Christ*, hath not only given himself for us, by a *legal Substitution* in our *Room* to satisfy *Divine Justice*, but hath given himself to us, to be enjoyed in the nearest *Intimacy of Relation*, and a *vital Union* with himself, so that thus he is not only  
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the *Purchaser*, but the *Dispenser* also, to such potent Influences, as the Faith of his People, in the most extreme case does need; and as he *knows the ways of the Righteous*, in their *Necessities, Temptations and Hazards*; so he hath fixed them this way, in such an immediate and absolute Dependance on himself, by taking off visible Refuges, to give them a more special discriminating Testimony of his Respects, though then in the present time, it may have a very strange and dismal Appearance, whilst it is not understood in such a Case, how his gracious Design to accomplish the great ends of his Love to his People lies so near him, as to defer oft, an answering of their *natural Desires*, until things come to that Extremity, as may make way, both for the highest *Trial and Victory of their Faith*.

3. It is one of the most *fundamental Grounds and Principles of Trust*, that no *doctrinal Knowledge of this Mystery of Faith*, in its supporting Power against the greatest of Troubles, can avail, *without the Spirit of Faith*, 2 Cor. 4. 13. For here does the *Communion of the Holy Ghost, with the Saints* on the Earth most eminently lie, and the *Enjoyments of Faith* in the saddest Hours of Temptation are experienced, how the *Joy and Peace of believing* in such a Security of Mind does thus work, when there is no natural Cause, or visible Appearance for the same; and how in so strange a manner, a Christian's Spirit hath been oft carried above the *present Temptation of their Day*, with such Quiet and Composure of Mind, as even *in the midst of great Waters, they have not come near unto them*, so as to shake and stagger their confidence; and I doubt not, that many humble and tender Christians, *have at some times, been sealed with that inward assurance by the spirit of Faith*, and with such strength and clearness of evidence, in an *obligatory way* to their souls, as the greatest assaults

and opposition of *Satan*, which have been after made thereto, were never able to break the same, so bright and convincing hath the conveyance of such a *Seal* been in that time, as they could thus humbly *take instruments*, that it was assuredly given them of God, and was *truth and no lie*.

4. And it is not one of the *principles and grounds of our Faith*, that the great Author thereof, hath made its security so full, and with that evidence, as may fully countervail the want of *ocular demonstration by outward sense*: For thus does our blessed Lord testify, Joh. 14. 17. when he hath there promised the *sending of his Spirit to his Church whom the World cannot receive, because they see him not*, and can be no object of human sense, which is the only prevailing evidence and demonstration, with a *terrene Spirit*; but then shews his *Disciples*, that they had a more full and sure testimony: *For you know him, says he*, and I have made you sure by a higher evidence, as can leave no room for doubtfulness; for though herein does the *excellency of Faith* most eminently appear, in *believing things not seen*, and contrary to all natural sense, on the credit of Divine Revelation, yet is there no darkness this way, from want of evidence, since this must be understood only, *quoad evidentiam rei, sed non quoad evidentiam testimonii*; which is made as full, as that which we *have seen with our Eye, or have touched and handled* in that security which God hath given to us, in his way of believing.

5. I must yet add one *principle of our Faith*, for giving light to that *strong influence and power thereof*, amidst the greatest fears and terrors of future events; that it is sure such *who are Christ's, have not only things present, but things to come made theirs*, Cor. which is one of those great assurances of truth, that seems little understood, or improved by most, as being not only founded on that *fundamental right of our being*



*being Christ's and made thus heirs of those promises which are in him yea, and Amen to his people; but that such an entry is also on the enjoyment of this right, by the power of believing, and inward testimony of the Spirit, as can fully quiet the Soul of a Christian, and make things to come in another manner: There is then the residue of the World known. It is true, there is a rational prospect and discovery upon future things, by Human Wisdom: and the prudent Man sees and foresees the evil day, to provide for the same as Solomon speaks: Yea, what a thing should Man's Life be without foresight and sagacious discerning of what may be the issue of things, in a due application of proper means for such ends? and of those successive removes, that in the settled course and way of natural causes, seem most unavoidable; for on this must all true Human Policy found: But on the other hand, they see not how the designs of a supreme Providence may be taking place above the reach of Human thoughts, which does controul their measures and hopes, and how it was above the sphere of ordinary reason or their foresight, that events have oft occurred betwixt the entry and close of a year, as they could neither see or prevent. But there is a Divine foresight which is of another nature, by the evidence of Faith of things not seen and future, without extraordinary Revelation, as can render the enjoyments of Hope on the certainty of a Divine Promise, to be matter of unexpressible joy and support, when it would in an ordinary way seem to be against Hope.*

There is a third Proposal, of great weight also on this head, to know what may have the most near and immediate influence on such a raisedness and security of a Christian's Soul in an extraordinary hour of trial, and does then give the greatest advantage to such an appearance, when it can have no visible cause for

the same; for *answer* threto, it is indeed a secret betwixt God and the Souls of Men, and a matter of power rather than of words, what can raise such a confidence as hath no possible rise from nature herein? and in this respect, those who look at a distance, can never know where *a Christian's support, and his great strength lies*: Yet since this seems so strange and dark a thing to most, who may give some assent to the Doctrine of our Faith, I must speak a little further, so far as may tend to clear their judgment, who would know *what manner of Persons those are, who both in a judicious and experimental way*, move in so high a sphere, and are thus skilled in the way of trust, and secure reliance on an invisible refuge. But to render it the more clear, I shall touch this *in the way of example*, by some peculiar view of such, of whom I hope there be many this day on the Earth, to shew that none goes upon higher principles of true and enlightened reason. And though the measures of a Christian's Faith and establishment, be not alike, but of a very different *size*, yet may this clearly appear and be understood *by some special Characters* to illustrate the same, 1. That he is one who in serious recess, and retirement of his Soul, hath made a just reckoning of such *surprizing trials*, as are liable to a Christian's state here on the Earth, *where the alone way of believing against sense, must either be support and security, or else perish*. And that no present condition he is in, can be so prosperous or promising, but dark and black clouds may fall down when least expected, as all Human comfort and assistance may fail, and have no visible refuges to rest on; which hath thus brought the serious thoughts of Religion and his Soul, more close together, to know such an *infallible way*, as can never fail, and will bear *the whole expence of the most extraordinary and dismal trouble*; and that there is *indeed, such a temporal*

poral interest lying thereto, as an immediate Communion with Heaven, when the lower springs of comfort and supply from the Earth, may be shut up: yea, such a reality, as supernatural comforts in the peace and joy of the Holy Ghost, which are best known in the saddest hour, to be undoubted and sure.—

2. But when he hath thus judiciously reasoned himself to such a *supposal*; he is one who is no less deeply awakened to provide for the same, not only with respect to that last and great adventure of Faith upon an eternal State, but to know where this great strength lies, when such a case may occur; for then it must in a special way lie near, to have a *steadfastness of his own in the truth*, and to know the *strong and firm conveyances of the security of our Faith on Divine promise* in such a manner, as should not need the Seal of a Miracle, or the testimony of an Angel, to support the same; since as such a settlement of the testimony of God, is surely attainable, so he cannot conceive how Men can possibly walk in the light of any true joy and comfort on the Earth, until they once be at rest here. 3. He knows also, that the *greatest trials wherein he is listed within time, is upon the work and actings of Faith, in an hour of Temptation*, both in the truth and in the strength thereof; yea, how one day in his life, may have some special Commission for this end, more than many years formerly have had; but does consider herewith, how great the *recompences* are even within time, that wait on the issue, when the set measure shall be perfected of such unusual trials that I shall be the same as in Job, 23. *to bring them forth as Gold*: and as he considers how high a value the Lord does put hereon, since the *great dispensation, whereby he deals with his Church in this militant State is in the way of trust, and upon the credit of his truth*, when there is no sensible evidence; so it is the most important study of his



his life, how he may acquit himself, and stand to the proof hereof, for the honour of his God, and Master, who hath counted him worthy to put him on some *botter service and more remarkable conflicts this way than others*; and that he may hold fast the beginning of his confidence unto the end. 4 He must be reckoned one, who hath attained to a *special communion with God in the ways of Providence, by frequent and deep observation of the same*, and who thus can discern the great ends and designs which he hath upon his People, in such methods of his dealing with them that may seem more strange and astonishing to others, and in what *dark paths* he does usually lead such to whom he hath reserved the greatest testimonies of his love and respect; so that what proves most staggering to others, as to the way of the Lord's training of his choicest followers in this state of warfare, is made a special assistance to his further establishment. 5. But more especially wherein his great strength lies is, *on that acquaintance he hath attained with the communion of the spirit of God*, which was once so dark, and not conceivable by report; but now knows that it is an acquaintance of such a kind, as is not remote or at a distance, but by near and sensible approaches to his Soul; and is not by words but by things of the greatest substance and reality, with the sanctifying virtue of the spirit made so evident, as can make his Work and services for God, to be matter of the highest delight and enjoyment; yea, he now knows what a *spiritual faculty and life* is, for corresponding with those Divine Communications, so as with a judicious and discerning Ear, *he can know the voice of his beloved Master, from the voice of a stranger*, both in its sweetness to allure, and in its power and efficacy to draw, and conform their Souls into a nearer resemblance to himself, with that tenderness and fear, which is the native result of such an intimacy

intimacy of converse. 6. But as to this *marvelous acquaintance with the spirit of God, in order to an higher increase of Faith*; he is one who can give an account hereof also, that in no singular way it was attained, but as it does respect the whole community of the Saints by an unchangeable rule, as attainable, not only in the retired duties of communion with God, but by an invisible trade and commerce with *external Ordinances*, and the out-lettings of *sanctuary strength* this way, answerable to that, Psal. 20. 2. in both which respects, his Faith hath oft gained a higher interest and establishment, than by *external Providences*, as being more immediately dependent on the spirit of God; and as all causes must work answerably to the nature thereof, so can he *put his Seal* and testimony to that *hid virtue and vital influence, which those Divine Institutions of the Gospel hath on Men's Souls*, and is only peculiar thereto; yea, when others who stay only in the *outward Court*, are bound-ed this way with an *audible voice* to their *Ears*, and literal discovery of sacred truth to the judgment, such can witness what unexpressible support hath been then enjoyed for a more full settlement of their Faith, by *immediate conveyances of Power and Life to their spirits*, as hath made it sweet matter of admiration; what *invisible strength* hath in a *moral way* been thus imparted, and what remarkable returns of light they have had upon such a trial of *enquiring in the Temple, from the fountain of Divine light*, in the way of his word, under their darkest hours; which sometimes have been like *Elijah's Meal, in the strength whereof, he was enabled to go Forty days*, without faint and weariness. 7. But for a further *illustrating of such an example* whatever in a *preparatory way* he hath thus attained for a *special acting of Faith* in the most extreme case: Yet when this is not at a distance, but becomes a present visible object of sense, and comes



comes so near as cannot but in some extraordinary way affect his spirit, then does it yet more appear where *his strength, and immediate relief does lie*, in making that great trial of turning his eyes wholly to God, by a present address for such a special allowance from Heaven, *that his strength may be according to his day*; and then it is in his improvement of that way which God hath consecrated for the most extreme exigences of a Christian's life, he knows the high value and use of such great experiments he hath formerly made of *sensible acceptance, and audience* in the most astonishing straits, with such *testimony from Heaven* herein, and inward evidence on his Soul, *as if fire had come from thence to consume the Sacrifice*, so as he could then speak in that manner, Psal. 20. 6. *Now know I that the Lord saves his anointed*; and Psal. 40. 11. *I know I shall yet praise him*; yea, as he knows the way of humble wrestling in *prayer*, is not bounded in its warrant, by the greatest extremity, so, it hath been in such a case that when God does take some unusual trial of his people and of their Faith, he then designs to give them some great and singular trial of himself. 8. *It may be further applicable to such an example*, that through the workings of a *special Faith* in some great exigence and distress be such, that he cannot speak to others, as it is then felt in the light and power thereof; yet does he then know the security hereof, and present settlement of his spirit with such evidence, *as he sees as well as believes*, when he cannot possibly demonstrate this to the conviction of others, but as he knows with assurance his *trust* in such an hour, to be one of the most highly rational acts of his life, so is this no less evident and sure, how the *whole supernatural part of Christianity*, whereby a Christian is raised above himself, and the workings of natural light and reason, hath its *alone dependence*



on a near and immediate converse with Heaven; wherein his great strength then lies, that when a tide from without may be such as should quickly overwhelm his soul, he is thus put on a higher trial than at other times, of the certainty of *Divine support by a present gale of the spirit* to stem the same; such as riseth higher than the work or assistance of *Angels*: Yea, how it is not *habitual grace* only, that could make the practical use of the *Shield of Faith* to be clear and comforting in an extremity; if there were not some very immediate supplies. But if it be inquired what is the *ground* whereon they must adventure, and rest their soul in such an hour, and should especially fix their *Anchor* on, it is not conceivable, without respect to *two special actings of Faith*, by which Abraham and Sarah did enter on the enjoyment of the *promise*, when nothing seemed in an ordinary way more impossible, than this, that he was persuaded, God was able to perform what he had promised, Rom. 4. And she judged him faithful who had promised, Heb. 11. 9. But yet now let me add this more with respect to such an example; that he is one who in a season of greatest trial, knows the greatness of that witness he is then sisted under, to be of another kind, than any human observation that may be upon him, when he hath so difficult and hazardous a part to act on the Theatre of his life; and that he hath herein, not only the witness of the elect Angels, the watching and considering Eye of the Powers of Darkness, who are against him, but above all, that he is in a more singular way than at other times, stated under the immediate witness of the glorious Trinity, to see how he acts suitably to the greatness of a divine refuge, and these assurances which the God of truth hath given him to adventure on; then is it also that he knows the Trial of his Faith, does not alone lie, when he is now at so eminent a step thereof, for the quiet and support of his own spirit,

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comes so near as cannot but in some extraordinary way affect his spirit, then does it yet more appear where *his strength, and immediate relief does lie*, in making that great trial of turning his eyes wholly to God, by a present address for such a special allowance from Heaven, *that his strength may be according to his day*; and then it is in his improvement of that way which God hath consecrated for the most extreme exigences of a Christian's life, he knows the high value and use of such great experiments he hath formerly made of *sensible acceptance, and audience* in the most astonishing straits, with such *testimony from Heaven* herein, and inward evidence on his Soul, *as if fire had come from thence to consume the Sacrifice*, so as he could then speak in that manner, Psal. 20. 6. *Now know I that the Lord saves his anointed*; and Psal. 40. 11. *I know I shall yet praise him*; yea, as he knows the way of humble wrestling in *prayer*, is not bounded in its warrant, by the greatest extremity, so, it hath been in such a case that when God does take some unusual trial of his people and of their Faith, he then designs to give them some great and singular trial of himself. 8. *It may be further applicable to such an example*, that through the workings of a *special Faith* in some great exigence and distress be such, that he cannot speak to others, as it is then felt in the light and power thereof; yet does he then know the security hereof, and present settlement of his spirit with such evidence, *as he sees as well as believes*, when he cannot possibly demonstrate this to the conviction of others, but as he knows with assurance his *trust* in such an hour, to be one of the most highly rational acts of his life, so is this no less evident and sure, how the *whole supernatural part of Christianity*, whereby a Christian is raised above himself, and the workings of natural light and reason, hath its *alone dependence*

on a near and immediate converse with Heaven; wherein his great strength then lies, that when a tide from without may be such as should quickly overwhelm his soul, he is thus put on a higher trial than at other times, of the certainty of *Divine support by a present gale of the spirit* to stem the same; such as riseth higher than the work or assistance of *Angels*: Yea, how it is not *habitual grace* only, that could make the practical use of the *Shield of Faith* to be clear and comforting in an extremity; if there were not some very immediate supplies. But if it be inquired what is the *ground* whereon they must adventure, and rest their soul in such an hour, and should especially fix their *Anchor* on, it is not conceivable, without respect to *two special actings of Faith*, by which Abraham and Sarah did enter on the enjoyment of the *promise*, when nothing seemed in an ordinary way more impossible, than this, that he was persuaded, God was able to perform what he had promised, Rom. 4. And she judged him faithful who had promised, Heb. 11. 9. But yet now let me add this more with respect to such an example; that he is one who in a season of *greatest trial*, knows the *greatness of that witness* he is then sifted under, to be of another kind, than any human observation that may be upon him, when he hath so difficult and hazardous a part to act on the *Theatre of his life*; and that he hath herein, not only the *witness of the elect Angels*, the *watching and considering Eye of the Powers of Darknes*, who are against him, but above all, that he is in a more singular way than at other times, stated under the *immediate witness of the glorious Trinity*, to see how he acts suitably to the greatness of a divine refuge, and these assurances which the God of truth hath given him to adventure on; then is it also that he knows the *Trial of his Faith*, does not alone lie, when he is now at so eminent a step thereof, for the *quiet and support of his own spirit*,

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but for such an appearance before Men, as may tend to *sanctify God before the World*, and for a *putting his Seal thereto, that is faithful and true*, to whom these have *concredited themselves*; and that they durst follow him, with a resolute reliance, when both sense and natural reason did fail, and could give no support in such an hour. Thus I have offered a *view in such an example*, where the support and strength of a Christian's Faith, in the most astonishing hour of temptation does lie; and of the solid judicious actings thereof, *both in the way of light and power*: and there is herewith presented, a *special series and Scale of these steps, whereby such a measure of Establishment* is attainable under that *blessed conduct* of the word and spirit of God, as it keeps close by the *line of truth*, betwixt hazards both on the right and left hand; so that we may see on what firm and sure ground such are, and have their *Anchor* fixed, who thus know the work of Faith in an extraordinary case of trial.

But now in the *last place*, I must yet in an *applicatory way*, shut up this discourse with a more special respect to the times we are now in, when such great thoughts of heart, may be both from those *strange Providences that have of late gone over the Churches of Christ in those three Nations*, and what may be yet expected and on a near approach; since it is sure Men *does not know their day*, nor can take to heart, *time and judgment*, where there is no suitable regard to the voice of God in his *Works*, as well as in his *Word*, and what is given to be the most remarkable *talent of observation*, on such an account. I have spoke a little to such a *strange supposal the Psalmist makes*, as to what might be *the trial of his Faith*, in the day wherein he then stood: But let me speak a few things that may be judged more than supposable with respect to the *present time*, wherein it seems in some singular way to be stated from other times; and  
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though with humble sobriety I have desired to exoner my Soul on such an account, *in a late Essay, which hath been published*; yet having a rise, both from this subject, and the *present aspects of Providence*, I must crave leave to offer some *thoughts* farther.

1. Is it not more than *supposable* that such an appeal from the Lord, as we have *Isa. 5. 4.* hath a most peculiar respect beyond former times to this Generation? *What could I have done more to my Vineyard than I have done*, by new methods and trials, both in the *way of Grace* and in the *severity of Judgments*, to bring the Churches of Britain, again unto God? Or hath there been such precedents in the way of the Lord, with any Churches else, and in that manner, as these *fifty years past*, he hath made use of? And Oh! what must be expected to work for such an end, when no *instituted means* does answer thereto? and that it is evident what the highest improvements of *Men's natural power* can do, which is so much exalted by this Generation, to shut out the necessity of *supernatural influences* of Grace, with so little fear of such a *judicial restraint* thereof, as is at this day: For if men do but sincerely reason their Soul unto serious thoughts of such a case, what can be seen now by ordinary means, to beget a deep and awful sense of God on Men's souls, if he do not in some more immediate and extraordinary way appear; but, such an astonishing confidence and contempt of all *Divine signs and threatenings*, seem discernable as nothing in a *monitory way* does work or affect in Men's spirits: Nor is judgment from Heaven, a matter of *fear* with most, if it be not *felt*. But the same spirit which we may see *Isa. 5. 19.* may be visible in the present times, when they said, *Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the Counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, that we may know it*; which was in an express

way to speak, that neither their *Faith* nor their *Fear*, did rise higher than sensible evidence and demonstration of what was present in their sight.

2. It is a matter of truth also, is more than supposable, that the *stability of the Earth beneath us*, can give no assurance and solid quiet of Spirit, to those who dwell thereon, until they be at peace with Heaven: But whilst they reckon that nothing is more sure to build their hopes on, than this lower Earth, and thus have their hearts on the same level therewith, may see how amidst their greatest confidence and expectation, their judgment may then immediately have its rise from the same, so as in one hour, to make the alone support of their confidence, to be the *Grave thereof*; and whatever some have writ as to the *foregoing Presages of any remarkable Earthquake*, before it took place yet was it never known, that an appearance of God this way, either to forewarn as a sign, or as a present judgment, did occur but with a present surprisal, when nothing hereof, was feared or suspected: And it hath ever been one of the most immediate signs of *sudden destruction*, when a people's security hath come to that height, as nothing could be awakning in such a case, answerable to that 1 *Thess.* 5. 3. when they said, *peace, peace*, then was a destroying stroke most eminent and near: And I may speak this with assurance, that either these *late Providences* by which God hath in so remarkable a manner made himself known, shall be regarded as *signs*, and carry Men's spirits above any product of *natural causes* herein unto God, or will at last be felt, by what is signified thereby.

3. I hope, it can be no questionable thing with any of a serious and considering Spirit, that as the *standing of the World*, and its being secured from the extremity of justice, is alone by a *dispensation of*  
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*Grace, and the tenor of the second Covenant, with respect to the Church therein, so is it in no other way but of Grace only, that Britain hath this day, any claim or charter of Right, to the Blessings of Providence, and for having the badges of Divine Protection kept up: Nor could the furthest of Human strength and counsel avail then, if once the full measure of the long-suffering and tenderness of God, should be summed up, that hath assuredly its set bounds, to the most eminent Churches where sometimes God hath more remarkably shined; and oh! what a thing should this World be to live in, were it but for one day or hour, if there should be a withholding of an immediate Divine care and inspection over the same, or for so small a time, that Door could be shut up of Intercourse betwixt Heaven and the Saints here, which by a Divine immutable constitution of Grace, is kept open, whilst they are within time: But this is a thing as to any publick and national interest, that seems to have little credit or regard with Men, what invisible Influence, such a bid Party, who makes the least appearance in the Earth, hath on the greatest changes thereof; and how a filling up the measure of the Elect, in a Nation and continuance of the Candlestick there, with the oversight of a special Providence, is still of the same extent.*

4. It is a Dilemma of undeniable evidence, as to the publick state and interest of those Nations, that we must either have God for us, in the efficacy and outgoings of his Providence, or against us: That God, who in the supreme administration of his Government over the World, stands not as neuter, or as a witness only to the actings of Men; but if he be not on our side, and interested in our cause, we must then know him as an Adversary: For there can be no possible midst herein, that God, whose room all the World cannot supply, if he should be shut out of our Counsels;

*Counsels* ; yea, such a God we have both to fear and rely on, who is not one like to ourselves, to be put off with words, or a complimentary address in a *stated form only*, or can expect in Faith, that this will bring assistance to turn the *scale of Providence on our side*, if he be not according to his revealed Counsel, with an entire reliance on him alone, *adored and feared as God* : Yea, it is sure in no Human affairs, he does *more immediately appear, and by an extraordinary Ministry of the Angels*, than in the *decision of War and of Battles*, for which cause he does in so special a respect, take that *style unto himself to be the Lord of Hosts*. It should seem a strange and astonishing thing, *how Men can live on the Earth without God*, without whom they cannot live for one moment, and in whose Hand their Breath is ; yet if we look to the *publick state of Religion* this day, nothing may be more applicable to the most numerous part of the *Reformed Churches* than this ; and that the *sense of a Deity, hath more power and influence amongst Heathens*, who walk in the name of their God, than it hath amongst *millions of professed Christians* ; for except we shut our reason, such must be surely said to *live without God in the Earth, and not to walk in his name*, who live without any resolute dependance and trust upon him in the course and conduct of their affairs ; whose great business in the World lies *only with Men*, and are much more influenced by such a fear, than of his frownings, and terror, who made Heaven and Earth ; when it seem's now easy with most to *lose God*, if they may gain *Men*, and make an interest that way, tho' the purchase will never bear the expence ; yea, can go the farthest length of *external Worship* in Church Assemblies, and yet be *without God*, then as to any *internal converse or enjoyment* of him by inward acts of adoration ; and what account can such possibly make of an *invi-*  
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*visible God*, who know no other measure of their confidence, but as *visible things* do either smile or frown upon them; but there is one respect further wherein we may see how most, who profess the name of God, do this day *live without him* on the Earth, which is in the way of *observation* of what passeth betwixt him and them, whether by *providences* or *influences on their Soul*, but take all things at an adventure, without any higher look than what is from *secondary causes*, though it was *in this way* that an *Enoch*, an *Noah*, and the whole race of the Saints, who have gone before, knew what it was *to walk with God* on the Earth, no less in discerning *his appearances*, and *work towards them*, than *their way and services towards him*: But oh! what will he do with us, when it may be feared that the most prevailing *suffrage* and *vote* of the generation we are now in, should be this (if their Soul might speak for them in such a case) *let God depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of the Most High*, since this light tends only to be tormenting, and does afford no comfort to such; or can it be expected, that he will allow in this age a *restoring Miracle* to bring Men again to the faith and sense of the Deity, as he did *in the days of Elia*, when we have a much greater *Talent* to be accountable for, than these had, or any former *Ages* past, having the *whole income of their Confirmations and improvements added to our Stocks*?

5. Tho' the great interest of that mystery of a *Christian's Faith*, which is the *special Subject of this Discourse*, does in the first place respect our *reconciled state*, and *justification before God*, yet is it too evident that the most usually trying and difficult part thereof, is, with respect to the *trials and conflicts of time*, and such a day, when they must *live immediately on God*, and give him *the glory of his Godhead* when no visible means can support, which is that *wonderful experi-*  
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*ment of Faith* in the power thereof that is here expressly pointed at, when it is by the *spirit of God* as his immediate work alone *proportioned to the most extraordinary height of a Christian's trial*; but as to the *filling up of this great work of Faith* in the appointed measure thereof; it does principally 1. respect *the whole State and times of the elect Church*, and on this account, there is still a growing increase as to the measure of the *work of Faith* since *Abel the righteous*, and is not yet come in many degrees to that full height of perfection which it must have before the close of time; yea, herein hath *each of the Saints* their proper share and interest for bringing forth the glory of this excellent Grace to its greatest display before *Angels and Men*, which is an end worthy of all the trials, and suffering times which have ever gone over the Church, because this way of giving glory to God is only within time. 2. But it must be understood also that in *each age of the Church* there are some more illustrious examples that the Lord does afford to the World this way, in whom his Grace in the power thereof hath a greater triumph in the way of passive valour than in these, who have been most admired upon their *heroick actions* and conquest over Men. 3. It is undeniable also what eminent *experiments* have been thus afforded, upon these adventures of a Christian's Faith, which did not then answer the *ordinary standard* of the trials, which others have had; and though we may confidently hope, that the highest measure of the *suffering times of the Church* is now accomplished and past, and of the trial of the *passive Graces of the Spirit*, yet it may be a matter of fear that the Faith of Christian's in this day may have *some more extraordinary essay* in the way of judgment, as to the publick State of the Church, and of these Nations now in these *last times of the Gentiles*, than what hath been in *ages past*, and may

may need more than ordinary *ballast* to bear up against the darkness thereof, when such a *midnight hour* seems immediately to proceed the dawning of that bright Sun-shine, which may be truly reckoned the brightness of Christ's second coming, in that last state of time,

6. May it not be a matter of unavoidable evidence also as to the present State of the Church that there is surely *some eminent period of Providence, to which so swift and extraordinary courses of remarkable changes*, as hath in a successive way still attended *these Nations*, have a proper tendency; these being so unusual and astonishing, and out of the way of the Lord's ordinary working, as the most judicious, and deep discerners of things could not to this day have reasoned their falling out on principles of Human reason; yea, such as I must humbly judge, will not cease, until *the Spirit of God be quieted in that great design* which he is to accomplish hereby answerable to that *Zach. 6. 8.* on which he hath set his heart, who leaves not his work unperfected, which hath also the same sense, and intent. *Isa. 66. 9.* *Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth, &c.* nor (I am persuaded) will any Human counsel make *civil establishments* to be effectual, until that great design of Providence be more understood, and concurred with.

7. It is now a day of great expectation how the *next scene* of Providence may *open* for a further clearing of this design of the Lord about which I judge these who have nearest converse with God this day by his Word and Spirit, see cause to give their *fears the first place before their hopes*, as to some very extraordinary work of judgment that from all *signs* seems to lie nearest now to the *reformed Churches in the frame of Providence*, tho' we are like to have little either of Faith or fear, when it comes, until it

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be made an object of sense; but I am sure a few of these evident *prognosticks* that now are in our sight, would have deeply affected the Spirits of our *Fathers*, when we may see no Providences are so extraordinary, as to have any sanctifying influence on Men's Souls for the most part, or to advance the *publick state of Religion* as formerly; when an *outward calm and a dead lethargy* herewith does so visibly still go together, which hath a more mortal aspect on the present state of *Britain* than might be judged from the highest *paroxysm* of personal sufferings; when the *Christian interest* this day for accomplishing the great designs of Grace under a reformed profession thereof is as a low thing in Men's eyes in respect of what is more extrinsic, and foreign thereto; when also the long decrease of that *tide* of power, and influences of Religion on Men's Souls hath at last come to such an *ebb* by these *judicial removes of the Spirit of God*, that without some very immediate appearance from Heaven we might fear *lest Truth should quickly perish from the Earth*; yea, when it is so evident that *God is yet calling for some to stand in the gap, and make up the hedge* before judgment go forth, but almost none found to answer its voice; so intently are Men's Spirits now, even of such, who outgo others in a profession set upon *designs about their own things*; and it hath surely ever been a dismal sign to a Nation, when it becomes rare to find any suitable *instruments, and tools* to answer a *restoring work* therein, or to see that *raisedness of Spirit* for such an end, as hath been formerly, which may be feared speaks the long shadows of the evening before some horror of great darkness are too visibly stretched out. But if men do count these things small and remote from their eyes, and will raise a confidence, that it shall be *Peace, until there be another appearance for God and the interest of his Kingdom,*  
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*than hath yet been.* It may make the disappointment sad and dreadful in the issue: One thing I have thought strange, how there can be a *National love and respect* to its interest in another way, than to *have God interested both in their case and cause*, in the first room; or *how solemn and public Thanksgivings*, in a stated external form for the most eminent appearances of God, *whether as to a Nation, or to a City, or to Persons*, is so visibly divided from such an essential part thereof, which is by *Thank-offerings*, and *some returns to him in a promissory way by deeds and performances*, as well as by *words*, suitable to the weight of such engagements. But this is a rare practice now to be found on the Earth, to design some special *Consecration of the gain of any eminent National Mercies unto God this way.*

8. Yet whatever may be too evident in the matter of our *fear*, it is sure that the just grounds of our *hopes in behalf of the Church*, does far exceed the same: And though there be many extraordinary *Signs* to cause terror and consternation of Spirit, *there is one Sign of another kind*, that will compensate all, which is *that Sign of the Son of Man*, Matt. 24. 30. as is to be understood in a *promissory sense*; and how that great *Mourning of the Tribes of the Earth*, which is there spoke, to attend such a Sign, hath the same sense with that, Zach. 12. 10. and is clearly *expository* of the same, *They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and Mourn*, &c. as also that evident *Parallel* Rev. 1. 6. since these do so jointly bear evidence to the nature and intent of such a Sign, as will then have an eminent appearance with the first *entry*, and *returning of the Jews unto him, whom their Fathers did pierce.* I know some of the *greatest Writers* of this age, such as *Usher, Twiss, and Mead*, and of late that worthy Man, *Mr. Mather, of New-England*, take this in the same sense, only seem to reckon this

*Sign* to be the *thing signified of Christ himself*, in a visible appearance then to the World: But this will be e're long in another manner understood in the event. Yet I have found it so sweet a subject of thoughts in these dismal and sad times, when other *Signs* are so tremendous, that in some things which are most clear herein, and suitable to humble sobriety, I must speak a few things. 1. How it is unquestionable, this is that *one Sign* by way of singularity, *which our blessed Head and Redeemer, does appropriate to himself* as his, and to be the Sign καὶ ἑοχρῶν of the *Son of Man*, such as hath never been given to the World like thereto, nor will ever be, until he himself come to Judgment. 2. It is surely a *Sign* which must be publick and conspicuous to the World, in *some extraordinary Vision to Human sense*; for therein is the intent of that *Prediction* made express and clear: But as to the nature hereof, or its duration, I judge it suitable not to enquire, whether the *Holy Ghost* hath not more particularly cleared the same, and reserved a further discovery thereof, to the *event*. It is sure also, when this great appearance shall be to the World, it will be with that demonstrative and undubitable evidence as the *Sign of the Son of Man*, as will beyond any contradiction, expound itself, and verify such a *Prediction of our blessed Lord*, before Angels and Men. 4. It must be understood as a *Sign* that will be *deeply affecting*, and work in an extraordinary way on Men's Spirits, to cause so great and universal a *mourning*, which will not be as some have understood, a *mourning from horror*, but what will be a result not only of the greatness and certainty of the *Sign*, but of an extraordinary concurrence of the Spirit of God herewith, to answer that eminent design of Grace, with a peculiar respect to the *Jewish race*, as may be clearly seen *Zach. 12. 12.* And herein I humbly judge, as *in the first times of*  
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*the Gospol the Jews did require a Sign from Heaven* to engage them to the Christian Faith, as the Apostle speaks 1 Cor. 1. 22. so that this way now in the *last times*, both with an eminent rebuke to their infidelity, and marvellous condescendence of Grace, he will yet in such a manner appear. 5. But it must still be according to what the Scripture expresses, a *Sign* and not the *thing signified*, or *personal appearance* of our blessed Lord, in his *Human nature*, whom the Heavens must contain until the full *restitution of all things*; wherein I must differ from the judgment of such great *Interpreters*, who take it in the other sense, though this will assuredly be such a *Sign*, as is then to have some extraordinary *impress* and *signature* upon it, to be demonstrative to the World and the *Jews* more peculiarly, of the *Humanity of our blessed Redeemer*. 6. But whatever may be the glory and splendour of so extraordinary an appearance, it must be still reckoned such as the state of mortality can bear, since that *Vision* that he gave to his beloved *Disciple John*, of himself in his glorified state, *Rev. 1.* was so overpowering, as he who had sometimes *leaned on his Bosom*, whilst he was on the Earth, did then *fall as dead at his Feet*; and except it were supposed that he should put a veil on his glory, in such a visible and immediate appearance of his *Human Nature*, it is not conceivable, how even the Saints on the Earth, much more the residue, of the World, could bear a *sign* of that Nature: And herein my Soul doth rest with assurance, as to the *sense and intent of the Scripture*, about that much desired *Sign*, after serious and humble enquiry about the same. Though I must crave leave to add this further, with a special confidence, that this *Sign* which is to be the greatest, is to be given in a monitory way of his second coming, is now surely on a near approach, as being both that great *Signal*  
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of Grace to the poor *Jewish World*, and of its being very near to a perfecting of the Work of time, and his coming to judge the World; yea, since the *finishing of the times of the Gentiles*, and that great tide and effusion of the spirit, which will then bring a *Resurrection* therewith, from the dead to the *Jews*, does contemporate together, the *promissory evidences* of the near approach hereof, are such as I hope may of this Generation now in the Earth, may be made witnesses thereto.

9. I know it is reckoned usually, that the accomplishing of these great designs of Providence, which are yet to take place now in the *last ages of the World*, and the *exhibition of this wonderful sign of the Son of Man*, may be at a great distance of time, as to the event thereof, upon which I have had the same thoughts, until a more deep enquiry and search about the Counsel of God herein, hath brought me under a constraint of light, to see how *the work of time* in all its intents, is nearer to a final close, than seems to be apprehended by most; and that we are now surely near to an entering on the *last watch* of that long night of the *Church's Militant state*, when her *warfare* shall for ever be accomplished, and there will be no more such *long stages in the course and procedure of Providence*, as hath formerly been; but when the *last part of the Scripture Prophecy* is once come to the birth, and full height of accomplishment, then is it to be hoped that a *few years* will bring forth more than hath been formerly attained in some ages; yea, to this doth the *Spirit speak expressly* with respect to that great and wonderful *Revolution* in the *last times*, by the *incalling of the Jews*, and *final destruction of Antichrist*, that then he will cut short his Work in righteousness, and finish the same; because a short Work will the Lord make upon the Earth, Rom. 9. 28. by which the way and manner  
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of the course of Providence, is clearly expressed, as it will be in the evening of time, from what it hath been formerly; the word there in the *Original* is λόγος to shew that as the work of God which he hath upon the Earth, is the alone product, and accomplishment of his word, so when the administration of Providence, is drawing near to its last period and close, then *will he cut it short*, and hasten the same in some extraordinary way; yea, allot more to a day or year, than he did to many years before, in the ordinary course of his working; and as the first bringing forth of the Creation was a short Work, and a swift course that Omnipotency took herein, so may the last consummation and close of the great Work of Providence, be expected to make no delay: I am sure the Holy Ghost speaks expressly for this end, in that *aforecited Scripture*, besides other passages of sacred truth, which give light and confirmation thereto; but in what sense the cutting short of the Work of God in the last times, and his making a short Work in the Earth is to be understood, I must humbly offer what I am in Faith persuaded hereof, as agreeable to the intent of that Scripture. 1. How it is to be a short Work and a very swift motion that shall be then in the Church's increase, and in gathering of the Elect, as what will be answerable to that great extent of the Church universal, when it is made up both of Jews and Gentiles, and in such a day of power as the dew of his Youth, shall be as the womb of the morning, Psal. 110. 3. For though it be clear that the last triumph of Christ's visible kingdom, and the glory of his grace in order to conversion, must assuredly have a great Harvest therewith, for in bringing of the Saints, and filling up of that large room, which is yet void in the Church triumphant, in the whole appointed measure thereof, yea may be judged such as shall bear a resemblance to that progress of grace, and wonderful product

duct of its efficacy in the *first times of the Gospel*, so is it to be expected that this *last tide of the effusion of the spirit of God*, shall be so strong and prevalent, as to attain the *Work of an Age* formerly in a very short time, and verify that Scripture to the amazement of the World, Isa. 66. 10. how a *Nation and People should be born, and formed to the Lord in a day*. But I must herewith speak to a sad mistake, that I humbly judge many are upon, as to the *measure of that Prophetic millennium*, and highest glory of Christ's visible reign herein, as if that definitive time of a *thousand years*, should be understood *extensively* of such a *precise number of years*, and of so long a duration, when the intent of the Holy Ghost herein, seems so clear and evident, that it is rather *intensively* to be taken in the value and splendour thereof, when *the light of one day will be as of seven in one*, and the Work of God in a short measure of time then, will *virtually* amount to a *thousand years*. I know it is acknowledged by all, and clearly understood as David speaks Psal. 90. and the Apostle, 2. Pet. 2. how a *thousand years with the Lord is but as a day*; yet seems the sense of this to be little apprehended by most, how a *day before the Lord, may be as a thousand years*: and how it is intended there, to shew his putting such a value and glory thereon, as it may amount to the product of a *thousand years* formerly in the ordinary course of Providence. 2. It is in this respect also that the Lord's making a *short work in the Earth*, in the last times of the Church, may be understood by a more *swift course than usual*, in order to the *perfecting of the Saints*, who then are on the Earth, and *ripening them for Heaven*; so that answerable to their *attainments of Grace* in a more extraordinary growth herein, their *translation to Glory* will be the more hastened, and the measure of the Work and Services of their time, more quickly perfected: This with  
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humble sobriety, I have sometimes and do still judge, that the *Lord's cutting short his work then*, may be no less remarkable in the *short period and duration* which the Saints shall have on the Earth, after their calling, than that long measure which was allotted to Men in the first entry of time, as congruous to this design of Grace, to make a short Work then, and hasten the full translation of the Church to its triumphant State. 3. It is to be judged in this respect also, will appear that *cutting short of the Work of God in the last times, by bringing forth the great designs of Providence*, which are then to have their full accomplishment, with *so extraordinary a gale of Divine Power, and swift course thereof*, as will admit no halting or delay, but shall attain that in a very short time, which to our thoughts would seem great for an *Age* to bring forth. We can see now with full evidence for *what great ends the service and use of time hath been for the first entry thereof, and what designs the blessed Author of the same, hath had on the ages past*; But when we look forward on the *last Intent and Work thereof*, there seems to be very dark and strange thought hereof, by many, though the spirit of God by Divine Revelation, is clear and express about the same, as to what must *be yet filled up of the Work and administration of Providence before the end*: The testimony of Christ, which is the *spirit of Prophecy*, was most specially directed under the *Old Testament*, upon his *Priestly Office*; but now is the glory of this *Testimony*, as to the *Prophecies under the New Testament*, in a peculiar way, settled on his *Kingly Office*, in the whole *progress and gradations of his visible Kingdom*, until the close of time and it is in a *twofold respect* that the *spirit of Prophecy* does reveal the great designs of Providence, which are yet to be perfected before the end of time: The *first is as to a breaking down*, and final overthrow of the

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*Kingdom of Antichrist under the last vials; yea, as to the methods of Providence, and the manner hereof, is also exprefs and clear, that when the time is once come for this great and magnificent act of judgment on that City and Seat of the Beast by the fifth vial, it will then make a strange and unusual dispatch, and be an amazing surprizal, as the Scripture speaks, Rev. 18. 7, 8. when she says, I sit as a Queen, and shall see no sorrow; then in one day shall her plagues come; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. Nor can this be more marvellous in our Eyes when it comes, than what we have seen of the degrees of wrath and Judgment, that are already fulfilled on this Adversary; so as I must judge by Scripture evidence, this will be a work of short time, as it will bear an extraordinary and immediate appearance of God therewith: But there is one great design further in that way of breaking down, and overturning, which must yet take place in the final judgment of the Mabometan Empire, both as to Turks and Persians; which as it may be clearly understood by the sixth vial, and does with great evidence relate to what is foretold of this adversary, Rev. 9. 14. under the sixth trumpet, so as to the manner hereof, in that allusion of drying up the river of Euphrates; when formerly we see how these Angels were let loose for destruction, who were bound thereat: We may see how the same allusion does speak such a work of judgment, as will be strange, sudden and surprizing, as the drying up of Euphrates, by diversion of that river, did in one night make way to finish the Babylonish Empire in the time of Cyrius; and now some prelude and remarkable steps of judgment, as to the fall of that Empire, have been of late very obvious: But yet in a concurrence herewith, there is one great design of Providence, to be accomplished before the end, which is for building up, and a restoring work on that great and long ruin of the scattered Jews; and thus for*  
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gathering together in one, in the dispensation of the fullness of time, all things in Christ, even in him, Eph. 1. 10. which Scripture, I must humbly judge speaks peculiarly to that last uniting Work about the Church universal, both of the Jews and Gentiles: When the times of the Gentiles are once accomplished, which as I have a little touched before, then will it be understood in the event, how the value and interest of a day, may be by the Lord in that manner heightened, as to sum up and abridge therein, what had not been attained in a thousand years before: It was in the first times of the Gospel, that the effusion of the spirit of God, and outgoings of his Power was so wonderful and strong, as in forty years, the extent of the Christian Church, after the Ascension of Christ, was then greater in the World, than it seems to be at this day; which I do not question, shall yet once more before the close of time, be no less wonderful in the swift course and conquest of Grace, both as to Jews and Gentiles, than it was at that time. But as no great excellencies, or extraordinary splendour in any appearances of God, have been of a long duration, whilst the Church here is *Militant*, so the nearer all things are to the center in the final close of time, we should expect as God hath expressly spoke, that it will be with a remarkable cutting short of his Work then; and that the World will be in a strange manner surprized with his last coming: Yea, that the greatness of such a harvest of *Israel's conversion*, will bring in more in a short time, than many ages hath done formerly. 4. It is also in this respect that the making a short work in the close of time, may be judged, that after such extraordinary discoveries of God, and Methods of grace, the final Opposition then made thereto by the World, will be the furthest, make way for the last decision of Judgment when the Harvest of the Earth is thus ripened and made *White*, under such prodigious measures of guilt, more than



in all ages past; as the righteous God will then be interested in vindication of his Glory, to shut up for ever, that long period of his *patience* and *long sufferings*. 5. Let me but add upon *this head*, that I account it a *peculiar demonstration* of God, which he hath reserved to the last *times of the Church*, to shew before *Angels and Men*, what use he can make of a *short time*, for the *greatest ends* and how far he can cause it to amount in *perfecting of his Work*, to bring forth such wonderful things in a *few days or years*, that would seem as incomprehensible to reason, as for the *Earth to bring forth in a day*, or for a *Nation to be created therein*, Isa. 66. 10. It hath been the Glory of God, that some should *live more in a few years*, and act a greater part on the stage, than others in a *long age*; the first service of time was beyond all that ever followed upon this account, made wonderful and glorious, when *one day* brought at once forth the *Sun, Moon, and Stars*; and set them in their proper *Orbs*, and *another day* brought forth that *Intellectual being of Man*, made after the image of God; and can it be strange that the same God give such a demonstration of himself, and of the glory of his Power, in the *last shutting up of his Work*, as the World may see it is not in the reverence of time, nor of ages, when his design and counsel herein is to take place: But if Men will raise and build their hopes on the *long duration* of this horrid and sad World now in its *old age*, and think their *Houses shall be continued for many generations*; it will be a sad surprisal in the close, when they are found in the same posture at the *coming of the Son of Man*, as it was in the *days of Noah*: And I doubt not the *swift motions of Providence*, for making a *short work in the Earth*, will be yet rendered more astonishing than all we have hitherto seen; blessed are they that *watch and wait with joy*, for the drawing near of *this great day*

*day of redemption*, though the *precise day* and time hereof, be alone known to the Lord.

10. It is true, that the way of the Lord may seem to controul any *swift motion and course of Providence* in his procedure this day, *when the Wheels do to our sense stand still*, and things yet kept in a suspense, as to any great or remarkable *decision* in the public state of affairs; yea, when after such expectations now for a considerable time, there is so strange an *Interval of silence*, as to the work of God in this part of the World, and the *ballance* kept in an unusual manner, *equal, betwixt the French and the whole Confederates*, which are against him: It is unquestionably, matter of great thoughts of Heart, what the event may be e're long of such an astonishing *calm and stop*. But in order to this, let me humbly speak a few things to be considered. 1. How in all times of the Church, it hath been made observable, that *when the Lord is to bring forth some great Work of Judgment on the World, and on particular nations*, he does not only reinforce Warnings, and gives time herein to answer his call, but even when *his hand is lifted up will yet hold the same*: But where the most signal delay and forbearance hath gone before; it is sure the more dreadful and sad, is the *stroke* when it comes at last. 2. Though there needs a Divine light to make a right estimate and judgment of things which relate to the *present day*, yet if Men admit reason, it may be too easy to see, that there is no *slow motion* in the visible tendency of things, as they now move *in these three Nations to some fatal and sudden period*; except these things which should thus awaken our fears, have a more special influence to direct unto these duties, which might yet prevent the same: For even *judicious reason may prophecy* what aspects *such evils* have, as by a native and unavoidable result have the most near and immediate

diate influence *on a Nation's ruin*, when they are come to that height, as will admit no *cure*: And when the most numerous part of a *Protestant profession* therein, are so visibly stated in enmity to other, pursuing different and contrary interests, *as cannot but lay a dead list on all publick actions this day*: When also the *contagion of example* is so prevalent and mortal, but the comfort thereof so rare, *as to any of a truly raised and heroick Spirit*. And if we look to these who have a *leading interest in these Nations, as to their stations and qualiries*, how few of such may be now found, whose *Ancestors* had an eminent appearance for God in their day, that have the *Spirit of their Fathers resting on them*?

But now in the *third place*, I must crave leave to speak a little more fully in order to a *trying and inquisitive Judgment on a very great and affecting head, what it should mean that there are such threatening appearances of hazard to Britain from the French Power, in these times we are in*: I know it may seem a hopeful sign, that *such a Party* as we have to deal with, are such also against whom the *blood of thousands of Protestants* is crying to Heaven. And I am persuaded, *that the Holy God will in due time, avenge these strange measures of cruelty exercised there, upon the House of Bourbon*; and have indignation against that race, *until the Sun cease to rise and set*: But on the *other hand*, I must speak, that surely there seems something in an unusual way, *threatening in the present aspect of this Adversary*; on which I shall offer a few serious Reflections. 1. That for several years past there hath been such remarkable evidence of a *Seal of their Commission for Judgment*, not only to *take Peace from this part of the Earth*, but to be the *rod of Divine Indignation against the Reformed Churches*: For it hath been under this *rod*, that hitherto the most destructive designs have had the



the most visible successes; and when an *instrument of Judgment* is of God's choosing, and hath an *anointing for this end put upon him*, it proves then to be very formidable, as it hath the *impress of his terror and greatness put thereon*, beyond what is at another time; and is thus acted with an invisible power and concurrence, until such a work of Judgment be accomplished. 2. We see this is an *Adversary* who in this late design against the *whole Protestant Interest* in the *Kingdom of France*, hath had such prevailing successes, to carry on a ruining and judicial work of that nature, when in former times the *Protestants there, did with an heroick and invincible Spirit*, bear out against the utmost power and violence of *four Kings successively*; and could see them by an extraordinary Divine hand broke: But oh! now was the *day turned* no less remarkably, and the attempts of *this King* followed with that terror, fainting and lowness of Spirit, as to any self defence, that it might be seen, *as in the case of Sampson, their strength this way was departed*, so as nothing could avail until such a work both of trial and judgment, was accomplished: This I confess hath oft had an affecting sense on my own Spirit, and brings a more extraordinary call therewith, to have *our reliances more absolutely fixed on God*, and promises less to ourselves from visible means; yea, how to prevent such a hazard *at the fountain's head*, as is still threatening, when there may be just matter of fear, *that the date of his Commission is not yet expired*. But 3. Is it not known that this is such an *Adversary*, over whom the *English Nation* once had so great an *ascendent* in times past, as they were a terror unto that People who now does not only keep, but gain ground against the *united strength of so great a Confederacy*? so that there may be cause for a higher look than to what is *Human*, in the standing, supports, and growing strength of

of that party : And it is surely one of the *great demonstrations of Providence* in the World, which is both in the *rising and depressing of the Genius of a Nation and People*, answerable to the designs which God is accomplishing hereby : But this I leave to the more serious thoughts and judgments of others, what appearance such a *Sign* hath to us this day. —

4. It is in some singular way that it may be said the *French* have attained beyond others, to be *united within themselves* ; and on the other hand, no less skilful to divide and promote *discords* amongst those who are against them, and who now in this *critical juncture* of affairs, know how to *graft* their deepest designs on these *intestine distempers* and *convulsions* which are so visible in the *Politick Body* of these Nations ; yea, know how to foment the same, whilst *intestine conflicts*, even amongst the most *serious part of Protestants*, are so uncessant as to shut out all fear of this kind, and despise any moral relief or cure,

5. Tho' it may be of small notice or remark, upon any threatening aspect of such a *Party*, yet I must look otherwise thereon, even in this particular, that there has been such a long and resolute *conforming* amongst us to *the way of that Nation, in the most prodigious fashions and attires*, who have delighted herein to copy after such a pattern, that they may be at last in the righteousness of God, made to have as sad a *trial* of them in the way of judgment, as of that *continued influence and ascendent* have had over them in the way of sin.

6. But there is one reflection I must yet further offer upon this head, which in this day hath had a special impression on my own Spirit, that the *last effort and ultimus conatus of the Kingdom of Antichrist before its final fall*, may be feared, is not yet accomplished as to the *ultima clades of the Reformed Churches* ; yea, that this work hath fallen under his hand as the instrument waited and fitted

ted by Divine Providence for such an end; which hath oft made me judge, that the *date of his Commission is not yet expired*, when the same provoking causes of such a desolating stroke as hath been of late on the *Church of France*, are no less visible amongst us, and may have the same ground to fear, when we see such a remarkable *Beacon* in their case set before us. *The God of the Reformed Churches is no respecter of Persons and Nations*, who will not still bear with a naked shew, and an unlivened profession of that pure and excellent Religion we enjoy; yea, when the most *near and immediate Signs*, which in former times have gone before some extraordinary stroke of judgment on Nations and Churches, are rather in some further degree, applicable to us: There may be more than ordinary cause to meditate terror on such an account, *that there is a sound of great Wrath on this Generation, yea that a Sword is furbished and sheathed in Heaven*, which is to have some great destroying work under its hand, before it be put up: But oh! nothing is like to do until *something more extraordinary than we have yet seen, draw aside that veil of security* we are now under, and hide these things from our eyes. But I shall add herewith, as it should be a blessed surprisal, if the God of patience might yet spare and prolong a season of Grace, and respite so threatening a Woe; so on the other hand, an *experimental knowledge of the truth of Divine Premunitions*, when it is too late, and is had at so dear a purchase, will be very sad, when no conviction or repentance, can regain such a *season* as we now have, if it be once lost: But as the Proverb speaks, *non licet in bello aut morte bis errare*.

There is *one thing* yet further now in the *shutting up of this Discourse*, which I must in a few words touch; that as it is the alone *prerogative of the Deity* to declare things to come, *before they spring forth*, and



who hath bounded the *prospect* and evidence of his People as to *future events*, or what he is yet bringing forth of his work in the *last times*, according to the *extent of Divine Revelation* herein, (since this is to be the measure of our light and discoveries, until the *second coming of the Lord*.) So it is no less evident and sure, than any pretence or prospect of the events of Providence, which have no dependance on any *natural causes*, is beyond the possible reach of *all natural Science*, or of that horrid profession which is so much aloft in these times of *judicial Astrology*, as it relates to *future and contingent events*; wherein Men as free Agents do act, when besides the known vanity of any such pretence, the *God of Truth* hath put them in the same class with *Sorcerers*, Isa. 47. 12, 13. *Stand now with the Incantments, and the multitude of thy Secrets, and let the Astrologers and Stargazers, stand up and save thee.* It is little taken to heart how deep such *real homage to the Devil*, under a splendid shew of a *dependance on natural causes* herein, may draw to a coming under greater invasions of his power, when it is so far a giving up with their *Baptismal Covenant*. I could speak what hath been with too sad evidence known of its *tragick effects*, but *one instance* leads me now specially to speak thereto; that before this last *tremendous Earthquake* at Jamaica, there was so strange and universal a tendence in that place, to *consult Astrologers in their usual undertakings as to the event*, as did inforce a *serious Minister of the Gospel*, who was there a little time before that *stroke*; not only to *preach*, and appear against such a contagious *Wickedness* as that which brings some remarkable judgment with it, but to *publish something in Print* against the same; which is *here extant*: But they could not thus foresee their own destiny that was so near approaching. I might further add a very *sad instance*  
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as to a Person who was unquestionably of eminent piety and parts, who by a too eager curiosity, was carried to make some trial of that study, which tended not only to be his snare, but to most tragick effects in his own personal lot: Though I forbear to speak more particularly herein, only that God is a jealous God, who will not pass some evils, without a severe remark thereon.

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*An additional Enquiry on that singular conduct of Providence, which is about the Saints here, and upon some of the greatest depths thereof, for giving further Light to the foregoing Discourse on that Subject.*

I Hope there may be many this day on the Earth, who are indeed on so desirable a *scent*, and to whom this will be a *subject* of great weight, to know the way of the Lord, and outgoings of his Providence towards them, amidst the various changes of their life, and in the more eminent periods and stations thereof: But this proves in another manner, an *exercising subject* in an hour of great temptation, to carry the strength of a Christian's Soul thereon, and to penetrate on such reasons and designs, that the Majesty of God hath in more strange and extraordinary Providences, which may for a time, put them in an amaze when darkness does overshadow the same; since for Men thus to be *skilled and discerning in his ways*, is surely one of the highest attainments of spiritual Wisdom within time. There are two *mysteries* of Divine truth to be matter of deep

thoughts and reflection, the *one is a Christian's conduct and Passage through time, the other is his way and ascent to that blessed World which is above, at death*; which is by the immediate *Ministry of the Angels*: But it is surely the *first* that is most marvellous herein, since the special leading and communion of the *spirit of God* is so essential thereto; yea, the concurrence of the *whole glorious Trinity*, and where every step in that passage is watched by *infernal spirits*, whilst they are beset with a body of death: But this is an experiment also does never fail, that the most dark and searching trials, which may be in some unusual manner measured out, do still make way for the greatest discoveries of Providence, and giving more light to the *deep things of God* herein.

What I shall now speak to, is on some *special Enquiry* for attaining a more clear light upon this *subject*; in the *Resolution whereof*, it will be found how much the *highest assistance and support of a Christian's Faith* in the conflicts of their warfare, when it comes to the most trying part thereof, *does lie here*; and for having some clear and experimental acquaintance with the same, which is one of the most choice improvements of grace, that we are called to within time.

1. *Enquiry* that may be suitable here, is to know in what special manner a Christian is *stated*, with respect to the *administration of Divine Providence* in his Militant course, and how he is interested herein, above the whole residue of Men in a most singular respect; for *clearing* of which it is evident.

1. That it is sure with their immediate entry unto a *new state* by converting grace, they come then under a *special conduct and care of a watching Providence*, and of the delegate Ministry of the *Angels* which will never cease, no not for one moment, until



til the *putting off of their Armour*, and a being carried into the eternal embracements of Divine love.

2. They are in such a manner *stated* also, under the interpositions of this special care and oversight of *Providence* as if such a Christian *were alone on the Earth*, and not another, about whom so great a business and regard from Heaven is put forth; so high is that *value* which God does put upon one of these, who are the immediate objects of his complacency and delight.

3. It is in such a manner he is interested herein, as a *talent* under trust of the highest concern, how to be answerable thereto, both by *judicious observation* of what this way passeth betwixt God and them, and how their suits have been returned after much waiting hereon; as also for answering the several ends thereof, in their *improvements* of the same.

4. Yea, it is in this respect he is *stated* under so great an administration of Providence which is ever about him, as it is *the seal of Heaven* put to the certainty of Divine truth, and the adventures of his trust thereon, wherein he can see with joy and admiration, that he on whom he did *believe and not see*, hath in the issue, made him *see what he did believe*, to be undoubted and real.

5. He stands thus also related thereto, in the matter of a *testimony*, and sanctifying of God before others, upon the account of any remarkable issues of Providence, and to keep the *remembrance* thereof, up as a part of the most valuable interest he hath upon the Earth; when this way one *hour* in his life may occur, that can fully clear the *by-gone*, and conflicts of many years past.

2. *Enquiry* upon this *subject*, is to know wherein the *singularity of some steps of Providence*, with respect to some of the Saints beyond others, do most specially

specially appear, when they are directed for some eminent design of Grace herewith: For a right understanding whereof, we may see.

1. What strange and *different measures* the Sovereign God does take in *his refining and trying work*, about some of his People, which he does not with others, as Isa. 45. *Behold I have refined you, but not as silver*; when it is at a much higher pitch, that David upon his proper trial speaks hereof, *Psal. 66. Thou hast tried us as Silver is tried*; which is there spoke as the most intense degree of exactness in such a trial, by a *botter Furnace*, whilst herein, some eminent project of love, hath been found still then in the *issue*.

2. To what an *extremity* also he will sometimes bring such to, in a trying work before it be accomplished, so as to *kill first e're he make alive*, and render the case wholly dependent on a Divine miraculous Power, as in that sickness of Lazarus, and that last conflict of David's at Ziglag, which proved the forest of all, when it was on an immediate turn of Providence, and so singular an appearance of God was breaking up herewith.

3. Thus appears in so strange a deferring of *light*, and concealment of the thoughts and Counsel of God towards the choicest of his People, that may be seen even under such a duration of afflicting providences, as may be ready to faint and stagger their Faith, so as no intreaties, no tears or wrestlings can prevail herein, until they have *stayed out their time* wherein they must be tried, as was in the case of Jacob on Joseph's supposed death; who was so familiar with God, and yet kept so long in the dark herein, as also of Joseph under so strange a *scene*, and *mystery* of Providence towards him, until once the word of the Lord had tried him.

4. In his taking some of his followers by a most

most signal conduct of Providence, of all visible and ordinary means of their relief; and crossing all their natural inclinations and desires herein, in an irresistible way, that nothing may interpose to darken his more immediate appearance in the deliverance.

5. But which may seem more astonishing and singular is in such a conduct of Providence, as is by *contraries*, and directing of *means*, that in their natural tendency, seem only destructive to such an end; yea, when by a falling down of the greatest darkness, he brings their case to some higher *paroxysm*, as may have all mortal signs, when yet such providences do then most powerfully work to hasten a comforting issue, above all which had gone before.

6 In an entering of the choicest of his People, with a more singular *seal* and frequenter confirmations of his love than at other times, into some extraordinary course and *series* of trying conflicts, which have been as the falling down of a dark and *long night*, immediately following so great a brightness! yea, thus also by such a constraint of Providence leading them into the same, as *David* speaks *Psal. 66. Thou broughtest us in the net, and laidst affliction on our loins &c.* and as the *Disciples of Christ* were constrained to go to the *Sea*, when a storm was to follow thereon.

7. When in following the most express and clear call to some special service and acts of duty, there occurs greatest oppositions, and cross providences thereto, as was in *Paul's Voyage to Rome*, when his *Commission* from Heaven herein was given, under so great a *Seal* and evidence; And nothing did shake *Jeremiah's Faith* more, than that strange and growing *tide* of opposition, which was still in the way of his work, when his call herein was so clear and extraordinary, as put him to speak thus unto God, *Chap.*



20. 7. *Thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded,* &c. when he almost overpowered by the enmity and violence of Men in his work.

8. In that strange length, to which a *deferred hope* may be continued before its enjoyment, even where the earnest, and confirmations thereof, have been in some unusual way made evident, until it seemed wholly desperate, and beyond hope; yea, when under such a *delay* they have been exposed to all kind of temptations, which in the nature thereof, as well as duration, seemed to contradict the same and give it the lie.

9. By such a concurrence also in some part of a Christian's warfare, as at the same time *there may be fightings without, and fears within, as the Apostle* speaks, such as may render it a strange mystery to others, when yet there is nothing *penal* here; yea, when this may be for a time, wholly in the dark to them, until that design of Grace appear for their being trained thus by lesser conflicts for such a *time* in their life, wherein usually *Satan's greatest effort* lies against them, and the highest *probation* of their Grace, which God hath designed to take whilst they are on the Earth.

10. I shall but add on *this head*, that as the Lord hath designed something in his way towards each Christian, that is peculiar to them alone, so is that *variation in the methods of Providence* about such, remarkable, whilst some have their most choice and comforting times *first*, as was *Solomon's*, and *his last days the worst*, whilst the *latter days*, of *Job were his best*. But there is also some singularity in the trials of the Saints, which it is sure will never be reiterated, either in the *kind or measure*; such as in *Abraham's being tried in his Faith, upon the offering of Isaac*; the intent thereof being purely *typical*: And it may be judged that

that *Job* was given for an *example*, to have a room only proper to himself, until the Church ceased to be militant.

A 3<sup>d</sup> enquiry, which is of great concern on such a Subject, lies here, in what respects it may be said that the light and comforting side of some very dark and astonishing Providences is gained, which had held such under greatest fears and suspense formerly; so as they can now keep sight of the way of the Lord towards them herein: It is true, this is not attained in the way of light only, but of power; and one day may fall in to raise the trial of a Christian, more than many years past have done; when the night may be both dark and long, without either *Moon* or *Stars* then appearing, before there be any day-break: Yet may such a rare enjoyment in a special way thus be understood, when there is some clear breaking up of light herein upon these things.

1. How congruous such steps in the spotless way of God, that seemed to have so dismal an aspect, are to the excellencies of his Nature, to the testimonies and settled Constitutions of his Word, and to these usual methods, which he hath taken with his greatest favourites, incases of trial of the same nature, and under as trying circumstances.

2. When they can thus see how great a design it is, which the holy God hath on the hottest conflicts of his People's warfare, and in redoubling their assaults, and that it is more than on the highest civil interest of Kingdoms and Nations: and how intensely his Eyes are fixed on what part his people does then act, wherein the honour of his own Grace, and their victory over the infernal Wold, does so much lie.

3. How there is surely an appointed measure, which the work and trial of Faith hath to be filled up, not only with respect to the personal case of

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Christians, but to the *state of the Church Militant, from the entry, to the close of time*; which hath still a growing increase, wherein each of the Saints hath *some proper interest* that is allotted to him, for perfecting of the same.

4. When they can also discern by what a special *over-ruling Providence*, the Lord hath usually bequeathed the choicest mercies, and prevented great hazards in such a way, as was most grieving and contrary to their thoughts in the present time; and hath ever reserved *the most rare experiments and trials of himself*, to the most trying times of his People's lot, when their support was beyond the possibility of Nature.

5. When they can see what a *foord* and strange passage others have been taken through, in extraordinary cases, by that alone way of *reliance on an invisible God*, which could have no rise from ordinary or *natural causes*; and how sweet a remembrance such providences have thus transmitted to the after times of a Christian's life, to witness that no *joy or comfort* on this Earth, is comparable to that which *hath followed the deepest agonies and down castings*.

6. When there is some clear breaking up of *light* upon the design and *deep researches of Providence*, which are in the most strange methods thereof, to promote the interest and service of *many* by the *personal conflicts* of some of his People; yea, for their being thus made a more *public blessing* to the time they live in, by *example*, and their special improvement of the same; since for this end more singular cases of trial, are usually allotted by the conduct of Divine wisdom, in order to services that such are designed for beyond others.

7. When it is evident both from *Scripture light and observation*, how no *notable merices and enjoyments of Divine respect*, have ever been attained, without



without something no less remarkable in the proving of their *Patience and Faith*, which hath gone before: Yea, in how strange a manner the Lord hath then chosen, to *hide his Work for a time*, and *shut up their way*, that the *returns of light* after the same, might be more sweet and discernable.

8. How it is unalterably fixed by the standing *Laws of Heaven*, that the *testimony of God in his revealed truth*, must first be the *object of his People's trust and expectation*, e're it be made the *object of their sense and enjoyment in its performance*; and that it is an *inviolable connection* which lies in such a method as is said of *Abraham*, Heb. 6. 15. *That after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise*; so as they can thus see how signal a part this hath in the *great Frame of Providence*, when a *long term of enduring in hope*, and under greatest conflicts, goes before the return and enjoyment of the same.

9. How clear it is also in the way and *order of Grace*, that God will first have a sore trouble, and depths of affliction to be deeply *exercising and humbling*, before it be made *comforting*; but with such advantage thereby, that these will be least *broke* by their conflicts, who have been most *bruised and bowed down* by *humbling exercise and Work* herein; this being ever sure, that his great power will never be employed *to ruin*, but *to raise and revive* the spirits of such.

10. When they see also these tender methods of Divine Providence, as are made use of in the training of Christians by *lesser Essays* of trial, with some *lucid intervals* betwixt one degree and another thereof, before the Lord bring forth his *design* upon some *more solemn and extraordinary trial*, which should have otherwise crushed and overfet their spirits, if it had not been thus *gradually* brought on.

11. But in this respect most specially it may be

said, the *light side of the most dark and astonishing Providence, is turned* towards a Christian, when he can discern and prove his way towards God, with such an humble *reference* as that, Job 23. 10. *But thou knowest the way that I take:* and when it is thus made evident in the *hid workings of Grace* and that *prevalency* it then hath to keep close with God under the greatest temptations; in their applications also, and retirements of the Soul with him, where they can have no witness but himself, *who sees in secret, that he may reward openly;* when it is evident likewise in their *designs*, and being acted from *internal motives* herein, to have *another service for God*, than such as stand with him upon the *wages of the Hireling*; yea, can *prove their way* in a counter motion to such evils, that are most contagious and exemplary in the times wherein they are; so as thus, *to save themselves from such an outward Generation:* When also their Work hath not only been to prove their *state* by sure evidence, but to know of what *manner of spirit* they were in such a case towards Men, and these who might have had the greatest influence on their trouble and grief.

But there is yet a *fourth enquiry*, of higher consequence in order to light herein, to know *where the life and comfort of a Christian's confidence in an hour of temptation does lie*, and what hath the *nearest and most immediate influence on the comforting Work of Faith*, not only in cases of *personal trial*, which may be most searching, but under any *surprizal of public judgment*, that may be on a nearer approach than seems apprehended by most. It is true, it is honourable for God, both to try his People above the power and support of nature, and to *bear them up herein*, in the view of the World: But as on the *one hand* it seems astonishing, what providences may occur to some of the Saints of that nature, as are  
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amongst the *Arcana of the Divine Government*, so is it no less wonderful on the *other hand*, what he hath afforded to be *assistent* thereto, which lie not in the reverence of the World, but are a secret betwixt God and the souls of his People; who hath not left them in the dark, as to the *hid spring of their supplies*. *This I must improve further here*, though it be a little touched in the *foregoing discourse*. in these respects.

1. That there is surely then such an undoubted assistance, as an *immediate communion with the spirit of God*, in addresses to Heaven by prayer, when no visible things can be comforting, such as goes above the *support of Miracles or Ministry of the Angels*, though this be not comprehensible by the spirit of the World; which can in a moment raise the soul above its greatest fears, when there is no cause by human sense herein; and affords also one of the highest *demonstrations of the Christian Faith*.

2. That there is herewith such an enjoyment attainable, as an *ineffectual sense and evidence of Divine love*, shed abroad on the soul by the Holy Ghost, which goes above any *external providences* for this end; and does efficaciously work, when no *light, no former experience*, nor *habitual Grace* can stem the tide of some extraordinary afflictions.

3. Yea, there is also such a *support* to be known then, as the *sensible and immediate presence of the comforter in his reviving Power*, and their fellowship with him, which no *local distance* can possibly obstruct it in such an hour, when their release must either come out of Heaven or utterly fail. *These are indeed great things*, which cannot be believed and not admired, that have thus the *nearest influence on the joy and peace of believing*, such as are no *abstract notions*, but the *greatest realities* within time.

4. There is the comfort of such *Divine promises*,  
which



*which by some special application of that Seal of the spirit of promise, hath been formerly known, will in a dark and sad hour, afford a most singular assistance: But it is no contemplation can speak the power of that evidence which hath accompanied the same, when in an obfignatory way this is given unto the soul, or the great improvement that hath been made hereof, when all visible refuges are failed.*

5. There is likewise the *support of sanctuary strength*, that is in a most peculiar way designed of the Lord, for a supply in the most overwhelming case; when by *the public ordinances of the Gospel* (where such a door is kept open) and under the  *blessing of that institution*, such hid and immediate conveyances of Power have been then experienced, as hath made them return with admiration upon the directing of truths to their present case, when nothing could be more *seasonable*; yea, hath been so evident a return oft to some humble reference and enquiry in the *Temple* herein, as if it had been by a *voice from Heaven*, both in the light and power thereof.

6. There is the improvement of *former experience, of ancient friendship and love betwixt God and their soul*, which in the saddest hour is of a singular use; as also of *providences which have been more extraordinary in their life past*; since it is thus *experience worketh hope*, not only upon our reasoning from the same, but in the way of an established mean and *ordinance* for this end, by that *indissoluble connection*, which God hath fixed betwixt them.

7. Nor is it *personal experience* only, (though that takes the deepest impression on Men's soul) but the improvement of such eminent acts of Providence, as have been most discernable *in the case of others*, under their greatest exigencies, and under some observable *Seal of God's immediate appearance* therein; since there is a *public interest* that the residue

due of the Saints have in the same, for strengthening of their Faith, as well as these who are most immediately concerned herein; to make some *new accession to the Church's treasure*, when the issue of some resolute and great *adventures of trust and reliance on God*, hath been made clear and conspicuous to the World.

8. there is likewise that rare assistance to a *Christian's Faith*, and its comforting Work in the saddest hour, which is ever then found in the *actings of love*, and fervent *emotions thereof to him*, who is the determiner of their lot; since it is proper to *love that it thinks no evil*, but hath still honourable thoughts of God, even under the most dismal appearances of Providence; and is thus watchful that nothing should estrange or *seperate betwixt them and the love of Christ*, whose severest act of smiting, is to *heal*, and is ever *saving*: And where this *love* is in exercise, it hath such a piercing intelligence with its blessed head, as to discern *his Heart*, and the *sounding of his Bowels towards them*, even when his hand would seem to destroy; which renders the *way of trust* so sweet and delightful, that *if this way could fail, they should make no other choice*.

9. Yea, there is to be known then, how the *comfort of hope* does work upon their being in the issue made *overcomers*, when the *Triumph* shall be proportioned to the measure and greatness of these *conflicts*, which have been in their way; and that it is so near when this shall be made the *object of their sense*, which is now such a *wonder to their Faith*; and that even in this *Militant State* on the Earth, they stand in right, *as a part of the Church triumphant*, who are insert as *members thereof, on the records of Heaven*; and tho' they be not yet in *possession*, yet have a proper room secured them in these regions of Glory, who may have no *title*, or comforting

forting interest now in this World: And how short a view are we to take of the things of time, whilst *that other World*, in both the states thereof, is each day filling up, with a growing and new Increase?

Let me *add* this further, that as each observing Christian should have some *record and history of himself*, both as to what hath been most remarkable in the *ways of God* towards them, and of their *designs and improvements of Grace*, which in any measure they have attained: So is it not expressible, what an interest this makes as an helper to their joy, when there may be a surrounding of them otherwise, with matter of *heaviness under manifold temptations*. It is by this *short view* which is now offered of *assistance*, that have the *most immediate and prevalent influence on a comforting reliance and adventuring on God*, though trials should be at the greatest height, may let us see what an advantage such have above these who seem to have the most support and security from *visible things*; yea, we know little how near such a day may be to these, who now are at ease, when no comfort or relief shall be found in another way: And Oh! that Men would in the way of reason, enquire more deeply about the truth hereof, and what they will do when human confidences are blasted, if they have no interest in such a support.

I should have entered on a *fifth enquiry* about the *present appearances of the time* we are in, but having both in the *foregoing Discourse and another Piece lately published*, spoke at some length thereto, as to what may be just *grounds of fear*, and for *confidence and hopes*; I shall forbear to add further on that head; but whatever regard may be to the same, which I must say, hath a directing *call* in a special way to these, who are in the *biggest station and power this day in Britain*; I can with humble confidence speak  
that



that what is there offered to be awakening to us as matter of fear, when such unusual grounds are for the same, was under the dread and *fear of that God*, to whom I must e're long give an account of the Commission I have received, as a *Watchman* to his Church; yea, with such inward quiet and assurance of mind herein, as if the *close of this Discourse*, should be the last of my Work and service within time; though something may possibly seem strange of what hath been offered on such an account: But I hope therein will be found nothing which may not be convincing to any of a serious and considerate spirit in the way of solid reason, and was for this intent designed, that by our *answering to the Call and Warnings of God*, which have been very extraordinary and evident in our day, there might be yet a *meeting him whilst he is in the way*, to prevent threatened judgment, which tarrieth not for Man, nor is dependent on visible things, when the *time* thereof, is once come: Only I must *shut up this with two serious reflections on the present juncture of things*, as may be two obvious. 1. That it is now some *years past*, since an unusual and conspicuous *signal of Judgment* hath been given not only to *these Nations*, but to the *whole reformed Churches* in that astonishing stroke, and devastation of the Church of *France*, where hath been a plucking up of what was so eminently planted there, and casting down of what was built, so as *for a time the Candlestick is removed thence*: This I must confess hath had to me, a more sad and affrighting *aspect*, that the correspondence which is this day in the *public state of the Reformed Churches*, does so evidently in as high a prevalence of Sin, and of wasting distempers, (if not in a higher degree than could be then charged on that *Church*. 2. That when the Holy God sets up so great and eminent a *beckon* as such a *ruin* is this day in our sight, he does

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usually

usually for some time allow it to be *warning and awakening* to other places for whom it is designed; and herein as to this *instance*, hath he graciously held his hand, that the *out-cast* of his People there, might have both a retreat and relief in *other Churches*; but Oh! when the intent of such an *astonishing beckon* is not answered, and ceaseth to be affecting to our spirits as at the first, I must refer it to the thoughts and enquiry of others, whether the *design of such a rod* as hath been there raised and made use of for *Judgment and breaking down*, as well as *trial*, be yet sifted, and hath no further Work for the same interest and vindication of the glory of God, as to other of the *Churches*; or if there be no cause now to fear that the *dregs of such a Cup* is not yet wrung out? which may be feared to be more severe at last, than what was in the first part thereof, if grace do not in a singular way interpose: And it is on that account my heart cannot but meditate terror this day.

*FINIS.*

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